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WHEN THE CHILDREN ARE GONE: CHANGES IN MENTAL
HEALTH AND MARITAL RELATIONS DURING
THE TRANSITION TO POSTPARENTHOOD

by

Kenneth Holland Cannon

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Family and Human Development

Approved:

Major Professor

Committee Member

Committee Member

Dean of Graduate Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah
1984

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Kenneth Holland Cannon

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ABSTRACT

When the Children are Gone: Changes in Mental
Health and Marital Relations during
the transition to Postparenthood.

by

Kenneth Holland Cannon, Master of Science
Utah State University, 1984

Major Professor: Dr. Brent C. Miller
Department: Family and Human Development

A longitudinal research design was used to determine if parents' personal well-being or marital relations changed after the launching of the youngest child and what variables might affect these potential changes.

Eighty-nine parents whose youngest child was a senior at Logan High School or Sky View High School responded to mail-out questionnaires, assessing parents general well-being, marital relations, marital companionship, personal stress, quality of parenting experiences and degree of parent-child conflict. Approximately one year later, a second questionnaire was sent and twenty-three of the parents who responded had launched their youngest child.

One of the most striking aspects of the results of this study was the general lack of statistically significant

findings. For most individuals, launching of the youngest child had little positive or negative affect on parents personal well-being or marital relations.

Significant relationships were found for parents who had low quality parenting experiences or whose relationships with their youngest child tended to be conflictful. These findings suggest that low quality parenting experiences or high amounts of parent-child conflict negatively impact personal well-being and marital relations and that the launching of the youngest child lessens the negative impact of these two variables. The exception to this finding was that low quality parenting experiences was significantly related to parents' marital satisfaction regardless of whether or not the youngest child left home.

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Life holds many normative developmental changes and transitions for men and women. Events such as leaving home, entering new school and work environments, getting married, having children, and having children leave home are some of the transitions that can be expected during the family life cycle. These transitions may be stressful for the individual or the couple because they may require adjustments and change in habits, values, roles and the day-to-day routine of life (McCubbin & Figley, 1983). This thesis will focus on the changes in parents' lives during the transition to postparenthood.

Definitions and Descriptions

The period of time when maturing adolescents leave their family of orientation is referred as "launching." It begins when the first child leaves home and continues until the last child has left. Launching may serve as a period of anticipatory socialization, or preparation for the empty nest years (Lewis, Freneuve, & Roberts, 1979). The terms "post-parental" years and the "empty nest" refer to that time in the family developmental life cycle which lies between the departure of the last child from home and the retirement or death of one or both spouses.

The postparental years are a historically recent

phenomenon. Only during the last century have changes in fertility patterns and the life expectancy of men and women combined to produce the postparental stage (Glick, 1977). Quaker women born in the U.S. before 1786 could expect their husband to die some ten years before their youngest child was married (Wells, 1973). There was no child-free stage in the family life cycle at this time. Data from women born during the 1890's, the 1920's and the 1950's show the increasing length of the postparental period (Glick, 1955, 1977). For women born in the 1890's a typical postparental period lasted about two years while those born during the 1950's could expect about twelve years of postparental relationships with their spouse. For most families of the western world today, the empty nest stage averages twelve to fourteen years (Aldous, 1978).

Problem and Purpose

This study will examine and compare parents who have experienced the transition to postparenthood with parents whose youngest child is still living at home and have not made the transition. These comparisons will be done to determine if there are any changes in empty nest parents' general well-being, personal stress, or marital relationship that may be associated with the youngest child leaving home and the subsequent transition to postparenthood.

The purpose of this study is to add more concise and accurate information to the body of knowledge about the

transition to postparenthood, and to implement a longitudinal research design which has not been used in previous research in this area.

Justification

The postparental phase of the family life cycle has been neglected by researchers in the past. There is relatively little information concerning what happens to parents when their children leave home. This is especially true when compared to the knowledge available about other phases of the family life cycle. Knowledge concerning the types of changes that occur during the empty nest period, and what characteristics are related to the degree and direction of these changes are important for practical, scientific, and clinical reasons. Since the majority of people who become parents will experience this phase¹, this knowledge will be helpful in describing in part, what happens to a portion of the population during this phase of life.

Conceptual Framework

The major theoretical and conceptual underpinnings for this study were derived from elements of crisis and role theory. The ABCX family crisis model (Hill, 1949; 1958) approaches the basic question as to why some families are able to cope with ease in the face of a crisis and other families give up, or are unable to handle the crisis under identical or nearly identical circumstances.

Role theory is used to examine the impact and process of the transition into new roles and the relinquishing of old roles.

The basic ABCX family crisis involved or explored by Hill (1949) describes A, as the stress or event which interacts with B, the family's crisis meeting resources. This in turn interacts with C, the definition the family makes of the event to produce X - the crisis.

McCubbin and Patterson (1982) have defined a stressor as a life event such as death, marriage, purchase of a home, parenthood, etc., which impacts on the family unit and produces or has the potential to produce change in the family and its social system. The launching of the youngest child from home is the stressor event in this study. Also associated with the stressor event are family hardships, which are the demands on the family that are associated with the stressor event.

Hill (1958) classified stressors in terms of their impact on the family unit. This classification included the following categories: accession - the addition of a family member (e.g. birth of a child); dismemberment - the loss of a family member (e.g. death of a family member); loss of family morale and unity (e.g. alcoholism, substance abuse); and changed structure and morale (e.g. desertion and divorce). The launching of the youngest child from home is

considered a dismemberment stressor.

Postparenthood is a normal and expected event in the life course of almost all married men and women. Despite the expectedness of this event, the changes associated with the departure of the youngest child, will require ongoing adjustment and adaptation by the parents. Roles are lost or changed in content and new roles are assumed. The general consensus of opinion among early students of postparenthood was that the loss of the children from the home left a void in the lives of the parents, especially the mother for whom parenting has often occupied a major portion of her adult life and had been a central part of her role cluster.

The B factor is the resources the family has for meeting the demands of a stressor event. These resources help the family prevent a stressor event from becoming a crisis. One family resource relevant to this study is Anticipatory Socialization. The transition out of the parental role may be partially anticipated and cushioned through previous life experiences. The launching of each child serves as a socializing influence for parents as they go through the process of guiding their children into jobs, marriage, and independent living (Nye & Berardo, 1973). Also, the temporary departure of the children from the home for college, military service, vacations or work experiences all serve as events to gradually wean the parents away from

the children and help both husband and wife ease out of their parental responsibilities (Nye & Berardo, 1973).

Another resource for parents during this time is their participation in activities and roles other than the parental role, which may serve as alternative sources of gratification for the rewards and responsibilities which were received from parenting and take up time that was once devoted to the accomplishment of the parental role. This is congruent with Sieber's (1974) theory of role accumulation. Seiber states that the more roles a person participates in, the more benefits, status, security and privileges a person enjoys.

Families are often at the peak of their earning power at this time, especially if the wife is working. High income, together with relatively fewer financial responsibilities to their children can allow parents to pursue vacations and excursions previously out of their financial reach. These increased finances can have a positive impact on the parents individual sense of well-being and the quality of the marriage.

The C factor in the ABCX model is the family's definition of the seriousness of the stressor. The parents expectations of what the empty nest will be like will probably greatly affect their adjustment to postparental life.

Crisis - the X factor is the amount of disruptiveness, disorganization or incapacitation which the family experiences (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). Crisis is distinguished from stress by the fact that a family may experience stress but have sufficient resources, coping abilities and a positive definition of the stress, so that the stressor never becomes disruptive to the family system. Personal well-being, life satisfaction, marital satisfaction and companionship have been the measures typically used by researchers of the postparental period of life. Los scores on these measures have been interpreted as crisis for empty nest parents.

Many of the changes that are taking place in parents' lives prior to and after the time when the children have left home, can be conceptualized by role theory as a transition out of the role as parent and into the new roles of postparent. The variables which are related to these changes affect either the ease or difficulty the individual experiences in relinquishing some of the parental functions and/or changing or forming new roles with regards to parents' personal functioning and marital interaction.

The parent-child relationship may have an effect on the changes which occur during postparenthood. Burr's (1972) theory of role transitions proposed that the more difficulty or strain a person has in complying with a role, the easier

it is for that person to make a transition out of that role. If parents are having difficulties in meeting their perceptions and/or societies expectations of the parental role, then it is likely that role strain will be generated. This increased role strain will in turn make the transition out of the parental role or these role functions easier (Burr, Leigh, Day & Constantine, 1979). Sieber, (1974) suggests, however, that the role which a person engages in provides benefits and privileges which may counteract low levels of role strain, thus making the transition out of the parental role easier only when role strain is relatively high.

Parent-child conflict is a variable that can affect the amount of role strain a parent experiences. Parent-child disagreement or conflict can be defined as mutual antagonism or misunderstanding between parents and the child on a variety of issues such as fundamental behavioral codes and future life goals, to less important issues such as the type of music to which one listens (Vander Zenden, 1978). These issues are connected to the functions of the parental role of socializing their children. Conflict in these areas make it difficult for parents to carry out their role as socializers of their children, or to feel that they have been effective in their socialization efforts. Conjugal disagreement over parenting practices on such issues as

behavioral codes, appropriate disciplinary techniques, dating, and the sexual conduct of the children is also likely to cause increased role strain for parents. The absence of children in the home works to reduce this conflict making it easier to relinquish the parental role.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature dealing with postparenthood will be reviewed in three sections. The first two sections will divide the literature historically. The first section includes the early commentaries and studies on postparenthood. This section will include literature up to 1964. The second section will review those studies published after 1964 until the present. The third section will review specific variables and findings from the literature that may be related to the postparenthood experience. The literature review will conclude with a synthesis of the findings on postparenthood and a list of the hypotheses to be tested.

Early Studies and Commentaries

Postparenthood has come under scientific investigation only since the 1950's. Prior to that time, the knowledge available concerning the postparental years was mostly descriptive and came from folkwisdom and commentaries based on clinical observations, speculations and inferences (Deutscher, 1964). These commentaries tended to be polarized in their view of parents' reactions to the launching of the last child from home. One position argued that the years following the launching of the youngest child became a time of freedom and increased enjoyment due to the lessened parental responsibilities and increased finances (Benedict, 1949 and

Steinglitz, 1946). No crisis was seen as occurring for the postparental couple, rather couples were seen as increasing in their personal well-being and marital harmony.

The majority of the commentaries, however, took the opposite view. For instance Burgess and Locke (1945) described the effects of the children leaving home for college, vocational advancement, or for a change of scene, as being partially disruptive to the family. They also suggest that the departure of a son or daughter via marriage resulted in a time of acute crisis for the parents. It was generally felt that having the children leave home for a new life, left the parents with frequent feelings of loneliness, emptiness and feeling of crisis over the loss of the children from the home.

Readjustment at this stage of family development was thought to be more difficult for the wife than for the husband. It was the wife that was seen to be left alone as the children departed, for she was the one who had been more active in the care and management of the children up to their departure. (See Waller & Hill, 1951; Burgess & Locke, 1945; Christensen, 1950; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin & Gebhard, 1953; Lowrey, 1943; Pollak, 1948; and Tibbitts, 1951).

Most empirical studies have not supported the notion that the transition to postparenthood is a time of crisis for parents. In one of the earliest studies dealing with

postparenthood, Rose (1955) examined life satisfaction among middle aged adults. Middle age was operationally defined in terms of their children's reaching the age of independence. The overall finding of the study was that the majority of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their life. So few persons reported that they were dissatisfied with life that three of the categories (very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied and average) had to be combined in order to have enough respondents to make comparison with those who rated themselves as being satisfied and very satisfied with life.

Irwin Deustscher was probably the first researcher to really challenge the notion that the launching of the last child from home and subsequent transition to postparenthood adversely affects parents. Deustscher (1964) identified and interviewed one or both spouses from thirty-one postparental households. Seventy-one percent of the husbands and seventy-nine percent of the wives said that the postparental phase of life was better or as good as previous stages. Only a small percentage of the wives and none of the husbands reported the quality of life to be worse after the children were gone.

Axelson (1960), in a cross sectional study examined the personal adjustment of a postparental group (parents having no children under age 18 at home) and a quasi-postparental group

(parents with one or more children under age 18 at home). Mothers and fathers were asked to indicate their present degree of satisfaction with seven basic life areas including family income, house and furniture, recreation, relationships to children, relationships to spouse, daily work and the community as a place to live. Differences between the postparental and quasi-postparental groups were statistically non-significant and there were no interaction effects by sex.

Reported in the same article (Axelson, 1960) was an earlier study where 239 women were asked to think back to the time their child was of high school age, and to note if change had taken place on several different variables. Axelson recorded a significant increase in satisfaction with the interpersonal and financial aspects of daily living and decreases in worries over the child's welfare and financial matters.

Postparental women however, were also found to have a significant increase in loneliness. Axelson explained that this was probably due to a decrease in community activities by postparental mothers. This finding, however, is not in keeping with Sussman's (1955) finding that most women increase their community activities during postparenthood.

Blood and Wolfe's (1960) examination of marital relationships resulted in somewhat mixed findings concerning satisfaction in the postparental stage. Wives whose children

had left home were found to have somewhat higher satisfaction with their husbands than wives whose children had not left home. They suggested that this may be due to the return of the couple to a dating relationship, and that a second honeymoon period may ensue. The overall finding of the study, however, indicated a general trend for marital satisfaction and love to decrease gradually over time, and that marital relations in general, were less satisfying during the postparental years than during the previous years of marriage. Blood and Wolfe suggested that this decrease resulted in part, from the departure of the children.

The early view that the departure and absence of the children from the home resulted in a time of crisis for parents seems to have had a significant impact on the thinking of the early researchers on postparenthood. Despite several early findings indicating that postparental couples tended to be satisfied with life, researchers of this time still drew conclusions about postparenthood consistent with the view that it was a time of crisis for parents.

Studies Since 1964

Most recent studies have not supported the notion that postparenthood is a time of crisis for mothers or fathers. An exception to this trend is Bart's (1971) study of middle-aged women who were first admissions to mental hospitals. Her findings suggest that the departure of the children from the

home may have a negative effect on women. Eighty-two percent of the hospitalized housewives who had over protective or over involved relationships with their children and had experienced the departure of one or more children were found to be depressed. This study, however, is limited to hospitalized women and care must be taken in the interpretation of these results.

Saunders's (1974) study of life satisfaction during the postparental period is one of the few studies on postparenthood to use a random sample. Subjects were drawn at random from two suburban residential directories of a major metropolitan area. All couples listed in the directories who were identified as having no children at home and for whom the husbands occupation was listed, constituted the population. Parents were asked to retrospectively compare their present life satisfaction with their life satisfaction before their children left home. Of the 120 respondents, only nine percent actually defined postparenthood as being worse in terms of life satisfaction than when their children were at home. The remainder of the sample indicated that their satisfaction with life after the children had left home was somewhat better, but showed no marked increase in this area.

One group of studies have examined marital satisfaction over various stages of the life cycle. The results of these studies, if graphed, generally showed marital and personal

satisfaction following a "U" shaped curve over time with a decline in marital satisfaction after the early stages of marriage and the children arrive, followed by an increase in satisfaction in the later stages of life after the children have left home. (Burr, 1970; Rollins & Feldman, 1970; Lowenthal & Chiriboga, 1972; Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Campbell, Converse & Rodgers, 1976; Miller, 1976).

For example, Rollins and Cannon (1974), examined the marital satisfaction of men and women at eight different stages of the life cycle. They found that respondents whose children had left home had significantly higher marital satisfaction than parents who were in the launching stage. Campbell et al (1976) used a variety of measures in their examination of the quality of American life. Men and women in the postparental period were found to have high levels of marital satisfaction and general well-being, and low levels of perceived stress; the postparental respondents scored significantly higher on marital satisfaction and general well-being and significantly lower on perceived stress than parents who still had children at home.

There have been, however, several methodological criticisms of these life cycle studies of marital satisfaction. Spanier, Lewis and Cole (1975) challenged the evidence supporting a non-linear relationship between marital satisfaction and stages of the family life cycle by arguing

that these studies relied on visual inspections of data to detect the non-linear trends, and that no statistical tests were made to see if the findings were significant departures from linearity. Spanier and his associates proposed the use of curvilinear statistics for the testing of the relationship rather than the use of linear statistics. Spanier et al then used this statistical procedure on three sets of data from different states. Only weak evidence was found in support of a non-linear marital satisfaction/family life cycle relationship.

Hudson and Murphy (1980) call attention to another possible flaw in these studies, stating that none of the previous studies adequately controlled for Type I errors. These authors then applied controls for Type I errors to a set of data and showed that marital satisfaction gradually decreased over the latter stages of life rather than increasing.

Despite these criticisms, the majority of the results of the marital satisfaction/family life cycle studies are congruent with other studies on postparenthood which show an increase in satisfaction from parenthood to postparenthood (Rose, 1955; Sussman, 1955; Axelson, 1960; Saunders, 1974, Glenn, 1975; Harkins, 1978; Lewis et al, 1979; Glenn & McLanahan, 1981; and Glenn & McLanahan 1982). Because these studies have measured respondents at two points in time

rather than several as in the life cycle studies, they are not subject to the criticism brought by Spanier, Lewis, and Cole (1975) and Hudson and Murphy (1980).

Harkins (1978) examined samples of pre-empty nest, empty nest and post-empty nest women for changes in physical and psychological well-being. The only group which experienced decreases in psychological well-being were those who defined themselves as being off-time with regards to the expected time of launching of their youngest child. On the positive side, it was found that the empty nest group showed significantly more psychological well-being than did the pre- and post-empty nest groups. No significant differences were found between the three groups on measures of physical well-being.

Rubin (1979) in her indepth qualitative study on middle aged women found that almost all the women interviewed, spoke of the departure of their children with a sense of relief. This is not to say that some of the women in this study did not feel any sense of loss or period of readjustment, however. Rubin described these feelings as a sad joyfulness, which is far from the acute crisis and depression that early authors said women experience. Rubin's interview data had a similar finding to Harkins (1978), in that those women who were off-time in the transition to postparenthood had more difficulty adjusting to the departure of their youngest child than did those who were on time.

Borque and Back (1977) examined the effects of four potentially stressful life events on men and women ages forty-five to seventy. These events included the departure of children from the home, retirement, major illness to family or self, and the death of the subject's spouse or a close family member. No consistent relationship was found for illnesses, and death had a stressful impact on individuals whenever it occurred. Retirement and the departure of the children from the home were found to have a stressful impact on parents only if they occurred off-schedule to the normally expected age of transition.

One study by Glenn, and two by Glenn and McLanahan used data from national surveys. This gives these studies a considerable advantage in sampling and representativeness when compared to other studies. Glenn (1975) examined data from six national surveys comparing parental and postparental persons on measures of psychological well-being. The results from all six surveys show that persons in the postparental category tend to have greater psychological well-being than do persons in the parental stage of life. A measure of marital happiness was also contained in one of the surveys and an analysis of this data revealed that postparental women reported distinctly greater marital happiness as compared to parental women of the same age.

The studies by Glenn and McLanahan (1981 and 1982) examine national survey data more from the point of trying to determine the effects of children on parents while they remain in the home. Glenn and McLanahan (1981) examined the effects of having had offspring on global happiness and five dimensions of satisfaction (family life, friendships, non-working activities, health and community of residence) of persons who were age fifty or older who had no children under the age of eighteen living at home. Data was taken from six U.S. national surveys which were conducted from 1973 to 1978. Findings revealed small magnitude coefficients and a lack of statistically significant relationships. It seems that having had children has very little positive impact on the psychological well-being of older Americans. The data from this study provides no substantial support for the notion that the presence of children contribute, on the average, to the general happiness and satisfaction of parents. A few findings were significant, and these seem to indicate that the presence of children cause negative effects on highly educated white males' global happiness and on black fathers levels of satisfaction.

Glenn and McLanahan (1982) report data from six U.S. national surveys conducted from 1973 through 1978. This study examined the effects of the presence of children on the marital happiness of adults. Subpopulations based on sex,

race, level of education, religious preference, employment status and stated ideal number of children, were tested for possible effects. No effects were found for any of these subpopulations in regard to the presence of children having a positive effect on marital happiness. There were, however, small but pervasive negative effects on all subpopulations tested, suggesting that the overall effects of children's presence on marital happiness is very likely to be negative for the majority of married persons in the United States. These conclusions, along with findings of increased personal and marital satisfaction, provide more support for the idea that postparenthood is a positive experience for most persons.

Variables Related to the Postparental Experience

Sex differences. Male-female differences in reactions to the departure of the children have been examined by only a few of the studies on postparenthood. Most studies have focused on females rather than males because they were assumed to be affected more negatively by the departure of the children. Some findings tend to support this point of view. For example, Borque and Back (1977) found that the launching of the youngest child from the home had a greater negative impact on women than men. Lurie (1974) found that parents during the launching stage, feel that their relationship with their spouse and their children, change for the worse during this time and women were found to be more negatively affected by

these changes than were men. Spence and Lonner (1971) generally describe this time as an unhappy one for women. They report that even after the children left home, the women still did not consider their job as mother complete if they still had to give advise or function in some other motherly capacity. This extension of the motherhood role was found to make the transition to postparenthood problematic and conflictful.

On the other hand, the greater bulk of the studies show that women respond positively to the departure of the children from the home (Rubin, 1979; Harkins, 1978; Deutscher, 1964; Neugarten & Datan, 1973; Barber, 1981; and Campbell, Converse & Rodgers, 1976). Some studies, however, have shown no differences between male/female levels of personal happiness or marital satisfaction during postparenthood. (Axelson, 1960; and Saunders 1974).

Still other findings report that men experience postparenthood negatively. A recent study of postparenthood by Lewis, Freneau and Roberts (1979), used a random sample of 118 fathers. The majority of these fathers were found to have either neutral (35%) or positive (42%) feelings about their last child leaving home, but nearly one fourth (22%) of the fathers reported experiencing feelings that ranged from somewhat unhappy to very unhappy concerning their last child's leaving home. This finding that 22% of the fathers reported

feelings of unhappiness is a considerably greater amount than any other study had reported prior to that time. For example, Deutscher (1964) reported that none of the fathers in his sample reported feelings of unhappiness when the youngest child left home.

Some other recent studies seem to agree with the findings of Lewis and his associates. Rubin (1979) found that males were more likely to experience crisis during this time than females and suggests this is because women have closely experienced the child's process of growing up which serves as a type of anticipatory socialization for her, while men traditionally have been less involved in the process of raising the children and thus may be less prepared for the departure of the children. Glenn's (1975) findings suggest that fathers, on the whole, are more likely to suffer a loss in psychological well-being as a result of the children's departure. Lowenthal, Thurner, and Chiriboga (1975) also give some evidence that men have some problems with this transition as they speak with regret of not having spent more time with their children. Barber's (1981) findings concur with this idea. Many men in this study were found to feel that they had failed to take advantage of the time when the children were at home and were experiencing negative feelings at the departure of their children because of this.

Alternative activities. An early study by Sussman examined changes in the activity patterns of postparental couples. After the departure of the children, couples were found to engage in more joint activities. Parents tended to postpone major undertakings such as a long vacation, remodeling or redecorating their home, or acquiring a summer home, until after the children had gone. Once the children had gone, parents were found to have more time and money to do things together. Not all parents' activity patterns; however, were found to change when the children left home. Parents who lived near their children and maintained harmonious relations with them were found to have no basic changes in their activity patterns. Rose (1955) found that postparental women with greater life satisfaction tended to be involved in voluntary organizations more, went out evenings with their spouse more often, and engaged in more hobbies than did postparental women who reported low satisfaction with life. Deutcher (1959) found that the more non-parental activities his respondents engaged in, the more positively they evaluated their experience of postparenthood.

Employment. Employment becomes an important variable in consideration of women's life satisfaction during postparenthood. Rose (1955) found that women who reported greater life satisfaction during postparenthood tended to be employed more often than those women who experienced less life

satisfaction during postparenthood. Powell (1977) found the women whose children had left home and were also employed outside the home scored significantly higher on tests of mental health than those who were not employed. Rubin (1979) found that women who worked reported fewer negative feelings in response to the departure of their youngest children.

Anticipatory socialization. Deutscher (1959), was concerned about the effect anticipatory socialization had on parents' experience during the transition to postparenthood. He suggested that the temporary absence of the children, for whatever reason, provided parents an opportunity to play roles that continue after the children leave home. Deutscher, however, was unable to test this hypothesis. Rubin (1979) found that anticipatory socialization has an important, positive impact on the transition to postparenthood. She describes anticipatory socialization as a developmental process which builds each time parents and child are separated; with each departure serving as preparation for the eventual launching of the child. One of Rubin's respondents put it this way: "Mother nature had it all figured out. By the time they're ready to go, you're ready to see them go" (Rubin, 1979, p 32). She suggests that it is this process which makes it possible for parents to experience the departure of the children from home with a sense of relief.

The parent-child relationship. Another variable to be considered which may have an effect on how parents experience postparenthood is the parent-child relationship. In Rose's (1955) study of life satisfaction, a greater percentage of women (48%) who declared themselves to be very satisfied with life, had their children describe their family relationship as being very close, while only 28% of the relatively dissatisfied women had their children describe their family relationship as very close. This same general relationship held for the mother-child relationship. No mention was made of the father-child relationship. Rubin (1979) found that the women in her study, who reacted most negatively to the departure of their children, were those who were disappointed with their children and had relationships with them which were unsatisfactory.

Synthesis of the Literature

Folkwisdom, early commentaries, and a few early studies have portrayed the transition to postparenthood and subsequent postparental year as a difficult period of life for parents. Burgess and Locke (1945) suggested that the departure of the children from the home caused an acute crisis in parents' lives. Spence and Lonner (1971) concluded that the postparental years were generally an unhappy time of life for women, and Blood and Wolfe (1960) indicated that marital satisfaction and love decreased gradually after the children

left home.

The overall evidence from the studies reviewed, however, indicates that for most men and women, the postparental period of the family life cycle is a time of increased personal well-being and marital satisfaction and lowered personal stress. In contrast to the postparental years, parents in the years just prior to the launching of their youngest child, have been found to have lower levels of personal well-being and marital satisfaction and higher levels of personal stress. The largest body of evidence supporting this notion has centered on the effects of a child or children on parents marital relations. Burr (1970), Rollins and Feldman (1970), Campbell et al (1976), Glenn (1975), Glenn and McLanahan (1981) all found that as long as children remain in the home, they have an average negative effect on parents' marital satisfaction and happiness. Other studies have shown that the presence of children in the home had a negative effect on general or psychological well-being (Campbell et al, 1976; Glenn, 1975; Campbell, 1976; Glenn & McLanahan, 1981; and Glenn & McLanahan, 1982) and personal stress (Campbell et al, 1976).

Several studies indicate that after the children have left home, parent's marital satisfaction (Rubin, 1979; Deutscher, 1964; Campbell et al, 1976, Glenn, 1975; Burr, 1970; Rollins & Feldman, 1970; Lowenthal et al, 1975; Rollins & Cannon, 1974) general well-being (Campbell et al, 1976;

Glenn, 1975; Harkins, 1978; Lewis et al, 1979; Glenn & McLanahan, 1981; Glenn & McLanahan, 1982; Neugarten & Datan, 1973) and life satisfaction increase (Saunders, 1974; Axelson, 1960; and Rose, 1955), while personal stress decreases (Campbell et al, 1976).

The literature regarding the effects of gender on parents' reactions to the departure of their children is inconclusive. Borque and Back (1977), and Lurie (1974) found women to be more negatively affected by the departure of the children than were men. Rubin (1979), Glenn (1975), Lowenthal et al (1975), Barber (1981) and Lewis et al (1979), however, found that men are more negatively affected by the departure of the children than are women, while Axelson (1960) and Saunders (1974) found no sex differences at all. The literature in this area is so mixed in results, that no conclusion or trends can be suggested.

Several variables were cited in the literature which seem to have mediating effects on how the departure of the youngest child from home affects parents in terms of their general well-being, marital satisfaction, and personal stress.

Rose (1955) and Deutscher (1959) found a positive correlation between involvement in non-parental activities and life satisfaction. Rose (1955), Powell, (1977) and Rubin (1979) found that women who were employed after their children left home had higher life satisfaction and better mental health than those women who did not work. Bart (1971) found

that eighty-two percent of middle aged women who were first admissions to mental hospitals had over-involved or over protective relationships with their children. These findings suggest that involvement in roles and activities beyond the parental role has a positive effect on general well-being after the departure of the children from home.

Deutscher (1959) suggested that the temporary absence of the children from the home had a positive effect on parents during and after the departure of the children though he was unable to measure and test this hypothesis. Rubin (1979), however, did find that anticipatory socialization had a positive affect on parents. These finding suggest that anticipatory socialization helps make the departure of children from home a relief rather than a crisis.

Findings by Rose (1955) and Rubin (1979), show that the quality of the parent-child relationship may affect parents' reaction to the departure of the children. Parents who have close, satisfying relationships with their children and are pleased with what their children are doing will tend to react more positively to their children's departure.

Hypotheses

This study will investigate the following hypotheses as suggested by the literature:

1. Parents whose children have left home will have higher mean scores on the measure of General Well-being at Time 2 than parents who still have children living with them.

2. Parents whose children have left home will have higher related mean scores on the measure of Marital Satisfaction at Time 2 than parents who still have children living with them.

3. Parents whose children have left home will have higher related mean scores on the measure of Marital Companionship at Time 2 than parents who still have children living with them.

4. Parents whose children have left home will have lower related mean scores on the measure of Personal Stress at Time 2 than parents who still have children home.

5. Parents whose children have left home will have higher correlated mean scores on the measure of General Well-being at Time 2 than they did at Time 1.

6. Parents whose children have left home will have higher correlated mean scores on the measure of Marital Satisfaction at Time 2 than they did at Time 1.

7. Parents whose children have left home will have higher mean scores on the measure of Marital Companionship at Time 2 than they had at Time 1.

8. Parents whose children have left home will have lower mean scores on the measure of Personal Stress at Time 2 than they did at Time 1.

9. Among empty nest parents, a positive relationship will be found between the measure of Anticipatory Socialization for postparenthood at Time 2 and the measures of General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship at Time 2 and a negative relationship between Anticipatory Socialization and the measure of Personal Stress at Time 2.

10. Among empty nest parents, a positive relationship will be found between the measure of Alternative Activities to parenthood at Time 1 and the measures of General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship at Time 2, and a negative relationship between Alternative Activities and the measure of Personal Stress at Time 2.

11. Among empty nest women, a positive relationship will be found between the measure of Involvement in Employment prior to the launching of the youngest child (Time 1) and General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction, and Marital Companionship at Time 2, and a negative relationship between Involvement in Employment and the measure of Personal Stress at Time 2.

12. Among empty nest parents, a negative relationship will be found between the measure of Recent Parenting Experiences at Time 1 and General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship at Time 2, and a positive relationship between Recent Parenting Experiences and Personal Stress at Time 2.

13. Among empty nest parents, a negative relationship will be found between the measure of Parent-child Conflict at Time 1 and General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship at Time 2, and a positive relationship between Parent-child Conflict and Personal Stress at Time 2.

14. Among empty nest parents, there will be no difference between mean scores for men or women on the measure of General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction, Marital Companionship, and Personal Stress at Time 2.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Subjects

The subjects for the study are an availability sample made up of mothers and/or fathers whose youngest child was living at home and was a senior at Logan High School, Logan, Utah or Sky View High School, Smithfield, Utah in 1981. After consulting with the superintendents and principals for each of the schools, the following procedures were used to identify the sample. Kenneth H. Cannon and Dr. Brent C. Miller attended faculty meetings at each school and explained the nature of this study to the teachers and solicited their cooperation. Teachers who had seniors in their first hour class received instructions (Appendix A) to distribute and return a short self-report form (Appendix B) requesting information concerning whether or not the student was a senior, whether or not the student was the youngest child in the family, and the name and address of the parent or parents who the student was currently living with. There were 131 sets of parents and 19 single parents identified from this process. This method of identification was used because the authors were denied access to the school records because of both school district's desire to keep the information in their records confidential.

The communities from which the population was identified are strongly family oriented and predominantly Mormon in their religious orientation. This poses some particular problems in generalizability. Mormons tend to have larger families than the general population of the U.S. As a result of this larger family size factor, parents would generally be older than the national norm when their youngest child leaves home. Mormon's may also have different values associated with their parental roles and may hold differing attitudes on the participation of women in the labor force. These factors tend to limit the generalizability of the study to the Northern Utah area.

Design

This study focuses on how parents change over time during the transition to postparenthood. A longitudinal design will allow these changes to be computed directly from the assessments obtained and thus avoid the making inferences about changes by comparing different groups. There was also no need to rely on the memory of the respondents, since they were assessed as the events occurred rather than after the fact.

The launching of the last child from the home is a natural event and should not be controlled experimentally. For this reason we chose to study the postparenthood experience using survey research. The specific longitudinal

design to be used is the Non-equivalent Control Group Design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) and is diagramed in Table 1.

This design utilizes an experimental group and a control group which are not randomly assigned, but are formed according to naturally occurring events. Those parents whose youngest child left home between the spring of 1981 and the spring of 1982, made up the experimental group. Those parents whose last child remained home during this period of time made up the control group. Data was collected from both groups at the two times mentioned.

The Non-equivalent Control Group Design controls for several threats to internal validity such as history, maturation, testing, etc. because any effect to the experimental group caused by these factors would also affect the control group. This design, however, may not control for interaction effects of selection with other variables or for the effects of regression (Campbell & Stanley 1963).

Table 1
The Non-equivalent Control Group Design

Launching of the Youngest Child		
0	X	0

0		0
Time 1		Time 2
(Questionnaire 1)		(Questionnaire 2)

Data Collection Procedures

The first set of data for this study was collected in May, 1981. After the names and addresses of the parents had been obtained, they were verified by checking the name and address with that listed in the phone book. Parents who were not listed in the phone book were sent the questionnaire packet without address verification. The first questionnaire (Appendix C) and a cover letter were then sent to each subject. The cover letter (Appendix D) briefly introduced the study, its nature, purpose and importance, and the procedures for completion of the questionnaire. The subjects were informed that their participation in the study would be completely voluntary, that their responses would be kept confidential, and that they could discontinue their participation in the study at any time.

In order to increase the response rate, respondents were informed that a summary of the results of the study would be made available if they desired one, after the study was completed (see Appendices C and H, page no. 11). In addition, a certificate for a free ice cream cone at the Utah State University Dairy was included (Appendix E).

Subjects were mailed the questionnaire on May 14th and asked to return the questionnaire by May 27th. A pre-addressed, postage paid envelope was also included for the return of the questionnaire to the authors. One week

after the questionnaire was due to be returned, a reminder postcard was mailed to all subjects (Appendix F). Telephone calls were made during the months of June and July, 1981, to respondents who had not returned their questionnaire.

These efforts resulted in a return of eighty-nine questionnaires at the return rate of 31.7%. Fifty-two of the respondents were female (58.4%) and thirty-seven were male (41.6%).

The second set of data was collected in April, 1982 from the respondents to the first questionnaire. The same procedures used in the first mailing of questionnaires was repeated. A revised cover letter (Appendix G), along with the second questionnaire (Appendix H), and a pre-addressed, postage paid return envelope was sent April 1, 1982. The subjects were instructed to return the questionnaire by April 20th. One week after the questionnaire was to be completed and returned, a reminder postcard was sent to all subject (Appendix I). Follow up telephone calls were made in May to those subjects who had not returned their questionnaires. In several cases, the questionnaire had been lost, so another questionnaire packet was sent to these subjects. These procedures resulted in 87.6% (78 of 89) of the subjects completing and returning the second questionnaire.

A summary of the characteristics of the subjects who responded to the second questionnaire show that fifty of the respondents were female (64.1%) and twenty-eight were male (35.9%). Twenty-two husband and wife pairs and thirty-four individuals, whose spouse did not respond or who was from a single parent household, responded. The subjects tended to be well educated with an average educational attainment of 15 years. Their average age was 52 years and eighty-seven percent were Mormons. Their average income was between \$25,000 and \$29,000 per year (Tables 2-5).

Ethical Considerations

The longitudinal nature of the study required that the responses of the same subjects followed over time. Because of this, we could not ensure the subjects anonymity. We can, and will ensure the confidentiality of their responses. When the data was coded, each respondent was given an identification number. Names were kept separate from the coded data. To further insure the confidentiality of the subjects, no respondent were identified by name in any public document; and group rather than individual scores were reported.

Measures Used

The dependent variables for the study were personal stress, general well-being, marital satisfaction, and marital companionship. These were assessed by previously

Table 2
Age of Respondents in Percentages

Age	Frequency	Percent
40-45	11	14.5
46-50	15	20.1
51-55	26	34.6
56-60	17	22.6
61-65	5	6.6
66-70	1	1.3
Total	75	100%

Note. $\bar{x} = 52.49$ years.

Table 3
Education of Respondents in Percentages

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
Less than High School	2	2.6
Some High School	0	0.0
High School Graduate	25	32.5
Some College	15	19.5
College Graduate	8	10.4
Post-graduate work	27	35.1
Total	78	100%

Note. \bar{x} = 15.13 years

Table 4
Income of Respondents in Percentages

Income Level	Frequency	Percent
0. None	0	0.0
1. \$ 1 - 4,999	0	0.0
2. \$ 5,000- 9,999	0	0.0
3. \$10,000-14,999	5	8.1
4. \$15,000-19,999	5	8.1
5. \$20,000-24,999	16	25.8
6. \$25,000-29,999	8	12.9
7. \$30,000-34,999	8	12.9
8. \$35,000 plus	20	32.3
Total	62	100%

Note. \bar{x} = 6.11 (\$25,000-29,999)

Table 5
Religious Preference of Respondents in Percentages

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Catholic	2	2.6
Protestant	7	9.0
Mormon	68	87.2
No preference	1	1.3
Total	78	100%

developed measures that have established reliability and validity (Appendix I).

Parent's sense of general well-being were measured by the General Well-Being Schedule (GWB). The GWB is a self-report instrument designed to measure subjective well-being and personal distress. The schedule is scored in a positive direction in that a high score reflects a self-representation of well-being. All items will be summed to obtain a total scale score which will be used in the data analysis.

Personal stress was measured by a self-report scale developed by Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976) for their national quality of life studies. This scale consists of two semantic differential³ scale items where the respondents are asked to describe their "present life" in terms of bipolar adjectives. These two items are "easy" vs. "hard" and "free" vs. "tied-down" (Campbell et al 1976). These items, in combination with five questions concerning the person's sense of being rushed, their worries about money, and their worries in general, comprise the measure of personal stress. These seven items are scored in a positive direction so that a high score reflects a self-representation of high personal stress. The items will be summed to obtain a total scale score which will be used in the data analysis.

The measures of marital companionship and satisfaction were constructed by Miller (1976) for his developmental investigation of marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction was measured by a seven item self report scale (MARTLSAT) which inquires into specific aspects of the marriage relationship. The seven items have five response options that were scored in a positive direction so that a high score indicated satisfaction with the marital relationship. The items were summed to obtain a total marital satisfaction score which will be used in the data analysis.

Marital companionship was measured by a nine item self-report scale (COMPNSHP) which measured the frequencies of companionate activities during the past month. The nine items of this scale have six response options and were scored in a positive direction so that a high score reflects a high frequency of companionship activities.

In addition to the standard demographic data that were be collected, other variables were measured which were hypothesized to be related to the direction and degree of change in the personal and marital dependent variables.

Anticipatory socialization for postparenthood was assessed by determining the frequency and duration of visits away from home which the youngest child had made. Two items assessed how frequently the child had been away from home and the duration of the longest period of time the child has

been away. These items were scored so that a high score reflects a high amount of child absence from the home, and were then summed to form the index of anticipatory socialization.

The number of non-parental activities the parents are involved in was assessed by having parents mark the type of activities that they were involved in from a list of 20 possible non-parental activities. The number of different activities engaged in were summed to form an index of involvement in non-parental activities.

A specific non-parental activity that was measured is participation in the work force. One item assessed how many hours the respondents worked each week. This is a four response option item which was scored so that a high score reflected high involvement in work.

The difficulty of recent parenting experiences was assessed by using a ten question semantic differential scale created by Dr. Brent C. Miller and Kenneth H. Cannon. The initial administration and analysis of this scale was carried out in this study. The ten items were scored so that a high score reflects a self-representation of difficult parenting experiences. The items were summed to obtain a total score which was used in the data analysis.

The frequency of parent-child conflict was assessed by a single item. Parents are asked how frequently they

disagreed with their youngest child during the past year. The item has five response options and was scored so that a high score indicated a high degree of parent-child conflict.

Data Transformation and Analyses Plan

Data from the questionnaires were coded on computer sheets, punched onto cards, and then transformed to a computer storage file for convenient analysis.

Hypotheses 1 - 4 will be tested using t - tests for independent samples. This statistic provides the capability for testing whether or not the difference between two independent sample means is significant (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, & Brent, 1975). Mean scores of parents whose children have left home will be compared with the mean scores of parents whose children are still at home on the measures of general well-being, marital satisfaction, marital companionship and personal stress at Time 2.

Hypotheses 5 - 8 will be tested using correlated t - tests. This statistic provides the capability for testing whether or not the difference between two paired sample means is significant (Nie et al, 1975). It is used when the same subjects are assessed before and after treatment, in this case, the "treatment" being the launching of the youngest child from home. Among the subsample of parents whose children have left home, correlated t-tests will be used to analyze differences between mean scores at

Time 1 and mean scores at Time 2 on measures of general well-being, marital satisfaction, marital companionship and general stress.

Hypotheses 9 - 13 will be tested using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. This statistic provides the capability for determining the degree of relationship between two sets of scores (Hinkle, Wiersma & Jurs, 1979). The four dependent variables; general well-being, marital satisfaction, marital companionship, and personal stress will be correlated with empty nest parents' scores on anticipatory socialization at Time 1, alternative activities at Time 1, child conflict at Time 1, and the measure of women's involvement in employment.

Hypothesis 15 will be tested using a *t* - test for independent samples. Empty nest fathers' mean scores will be compared with empty nest mothers' mean scores on measures of general well-being, marital satisfaction, marital companionship, and personal stress.

The use of parametric statistics in testing the hypotheses of this thesis raise questions about the violation of interval data assumptions. The data generated through the measures used, while being theoretically continuous in nature, are actually measured on an ordinal basis. The caution against violating the interval data assumption is that serious measurement imprecision would

result when continuous concepts are measured on scales that make the concepts into relatively few categories (Bollen & Barb, 1981).

Studies by Labovitz (1970), Bollen and Barb (1981) and Bohrnstedt and Borgatta (1981) have shown that ordinal variabes can be treated as if they conform to interval scales and that violating interval data assumption makes little practical differences in statistical results. This is not to say, however, that interval measurements should not be used where possible.

Some distinct advantages are provided when ordinal variables are treated as if they are internal. First, it allows for the use of more powerful, sensitive, and better developed and interpretable statistics. Second, more knowledge about the characteristics of the data is retainable, and finally, more versatile statistical manipulation is facilitated by using partial and multiple correlation and regression, analysis of variance and co-variance, and most pictorial presentations (Labovitz, 1970). Because of these distinct advantages and the finding that the violation of internal data assumption made little practical difference in results, ordinal variables were treated as if they were interval in nature for the testing of the hypotheses of this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The First Hypothesis predicted that parents whose children had left home would have higher mean scores on the measures of General Well-being at Time 2 than did parents whose children were still at home. A t-test found no significant difference in General Well-being between these two groups as shown in Table 6.

Hypotheses Two and Three predicted that empty nest parents would have higher mean scores on the measures of Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship than did those parents who still had children at home. These two hypotheses were not supported by the t - tests and no significant differences on Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship were found between these two groups of parents (Table 6).

Hypothesis Four predicted that empty nest parents would have lower mean scores on the measure of Personal Stress than did parents with children still at home. Data from the t-test did not support this hypothesis as shown in Table 6.

Hypothesis Five predicted that empty nest parents would report higher mean scores on the measure of General Well-being at Time 2 than they did at Time 1. Correlated t-tests showed no significant differences in General Well-being between Time 1 and Time 2 for empty nest parents (Table 7).

Table 6

Mean Comparisons between Empty Nest and Child-present Parents
on Personal Well-being and Marital Relations at Time 2

Group	\bar{x}	n	t	p
General Well-being-Time 2				
Empty Nest	121.82	17	-1.45	.151
Child-Present	115.00	47		
Marital Satisfaction-Time 2				
Empty Nest	27.77	22	-1.29	.202
Child-Present	25.84	45		
Marital Companionship-Time 2				
Empty Nest	37.04	23	-1.47	.146
Child-Present	34.28	43		
Personal Stress-Time 2				
Empty Nest	12.18	22	0.64	.522
Child-Present	12.77	52		

Hypotheses Six and Seven predicted that empty nest parents would have higher mean scores on the measures of Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship than they had when their youngest child was at home. Analysis using correlated t-tests did not support these hypotheses (Table 7).

The Eighth Hypothesis predicted that empty nest parents would have lower mean scores at Time 1 on the measure of Personal Stress than they did at Time 2. A correlated t-test revealed no significant differences on Personal Stress between Time 1 and Time 2 for this group (Table 7).

Hypothesis Nine predicted that among empty nest parents a positive relationship would be found between the measure of Anticipatory Socialization and the measures of General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship, and a negative relationship between Anticipatory Socialization and the measure of Personal Stress. Pearson correlations showed no relationship between Anticipatory Socialization and the dependent variables (Table 8).

Hypothesis Ten predicted that among empty nest parents, a positive relationship would be found between the measure of Involvement in Alternative Activities and the measures of General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship, and a negative relationship between

Table 7
 Mean Comparisons of Empty nest Parents' Personal
 Well-being and Marital Relations Scores at Time 1 and Time 2

Time	\bar{x}	n	t^a	p
General Well-being				
Time 1	123.21	14	0.48	.639
Time 2	121.71			
Marital Satisfaction				
Time 1	27.41	22	-0.46	.650
Time 2	27.77			
Marital Companionship				
Time 1	37.48	23	0.34	.736
Time 2	37.04			
Personal Stress				
Time 1	11.67	18	-0.46	.648
Time 2	11.94			

Note. ^aPaired or correlated t-tests.

Table 8
 Pearson Correlations between Anticipatory Socialization
 and Personal Well-being and Marital Relations Scores
 of Empty Nest Parents at Time 2

Measurement ^a	<u>n</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Anticipatory Socialization			
General Well-being	16	.06	.409
Marital Satisfaction	20	.13	.284
Marital Companionship	20	.01	.484
Personal Stress	21	-.08	.369

Note. ^aAll measurements taken at Time 2.

Involvement in Alternative Activities and the measure of Personal Stress. Data analysis using a Pearson correlation showed no relationship between Involvement in Alternative Activities and the dependent variables (Table 9).

Hypothesis Eleven predicted that among empty nest women, a positive relationship would be found between working prior to the launching of the youngest child and the measure of General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship, and a negative relationship between working and the measure of Personal Stress. No relationship was found to support this hypothesis as shown in Table 10.

Hypothesis Twelve predicted that among empty nest parents, a negative relationship would be found between the measure of Parenting Difficulties at Time 1 and the measure of General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship at Time 2, and a positive relationship between Parenting Difficulties and Personal Stress at Time 2. The predicted negative relationship between Parenting Difficulties and the measure of Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship was substantiated by the Pearson correlation. Pearson correlations did not, however, show a relationship between Parenting Difficulties and the measures of General Well-being and Personal Stress (Table 11).

Hypothesis Thirteen predicted that among empty nest parents, a negative relationship would be found between

Table 9
 Pearson Correlations between Alternative Activities and
 Personal Well-being and Marital Relations Scores of Empty Nest
 Parents at Time 2

Measurement ^a	<u>n</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Alternative Activities-Time 1			
General Well-being	17	-.13	.307
Marital Satisfaction	22	-.01	.484
Marital Companionship	23	.21	.167
Personal Stress	22	-.09	.336
Alternative Activities-Time 2			
General Well-being	17	-.19	.222
Marital Satisfaction	22	.09	.345
Marital Companionship	23	.17	.222
Personal Stress	22	-.06	.404

Note. ^aAll measurements taken at Time 2.

Table 10

Pearson Correlations between Involvement in Employment at Time 1
and Personal Well-being and Marital Relations scores of Empty Nest
Women at Time 2

Measurement ^a	<u>n</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Involvement in Employment-Time 1			
General Well-being	9	-.16	.285
Marital Satisfaction	13	-.17	.275
Marital Companionship	14	.17	.411
Personal Stress	14	.07	.125

Note. ^aAll measurements taken at Time 2.

Table 11
 Pearson Correlations between Parenting Difficulties (Time 1)
 and Personal Well-being and Marital Relations at Time 2
 for Empty Nest Parents

Measurement ^a	<u>n</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Parenting Experiences-Time 1			
General Well-being	16	-0.13	.317
Marital Satisfaction	20	-0.49	.012
Marital Companionship	21	-0.44	.022
Personal Stress	20	0.12	.310

Note. ^a All measurements taken at Time 2.

measures of Parent-child Conflict at Time 1 and General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship at Time 2, and a positive relationship between Parent-child Conflict and Personal Stress at Time 2. The data analysis using Pearson correlations did not support this hypothesis as shown in Table 12.

Hypothesis Fourteen predicted that there would be no difference between empty nest men and women's mean scores on the measure of General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction, Marital Companionship and Personal Stress. This hypothesis was confirmed by the t-test which showed no significant differences between men and women on the dependent variables (Table 13).

Additional Analyses

The finding that empty nest parents' Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship at Time 2 was negatively related to Parenting Difficulties, prompted further analysis on this variable and the variable of Parent-child Conflict. It seems logical that parenting experiences might be an important factor in a persons personal well-being and marital relations.

Pearson correlations were run for both empty nest and child present groups between Parenting Difficulties at Time 1 and Time 2 and the four dependent variables at Time 1 and Time 2.

Table 12
 Pearson Correlations between Empty Nest Parents' Scores of
 Parent-child Conflict (Time 1) and Personal Well-being and
 Marital Relations at Time 2

Measurement ^a	<u>n</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Parent-child Conflict-Time 1			
General Well-being	17	-.24	.179
Marital Satisfaction	22	-.29	.093
Marital Companionship	23	-.05	.416
Personal Stress	22	.13	.28

Note. ^aAll measurements taken at Time 2.

Table 13
Mean Comparisons between Empty Nest Men and Women on Personal
Well-being and Marital Relations

Group	\bar{x}	n	t	p
General Well-being-Time 2				
Males	122.88	8	-0.28	.786
Females	122.89	9		
Marital Satisfaction-Time 2				
Males	27.78	9	0.00	.997
Females	27.77	13		
Marital Companionship-Time 2				
Males	38.67	9	-1.04	.312
Females	36.00	14		
Personal Stress-Time 2				
Males	13.25	8	-1.05	.305
Females	11.57			

Among empty nest parents, Parenting Difficulties was found to be negatively related to General Well-being at Time 1 when children were still present, but was not related to General Well-being at Time 2 when children had left home (Table 14). This changes in relationship suggests a possible effect of the launching of the youngest child. No significant relationship was found between Parenting Difficulties at Time 2 and General Well-being at Time 2 for empty nest parents (Table 14).

For child-present parents, Parenting Difficulties at Time 1 were significantly related to General Well-being at Time 1, but not at Time 2. Parenting Difficulties at Time 2, however, were related to General Well-being at Time 2 (Table 14), suggesting a continued negative relationship between Parenting Difficulties and General Well-being in families where children remained in the home.

The overall pattern which was found between Parenting Difficulties and General Well-being shows that Parenting Difficulties are negatively related to General Well-being when children live at home. This negative relationship between Parenting Difficulties and General Well-being disappears at Time 2 for empty nest parents and remains for child-present parents.

This overall change in relationship with the launching of the youngest child was not found for the other three dependent variables. Parenting Difficulties at Time 1 and

Table 14

Pearson Correlations between Parenting Difficulties at Time 1
and Time 2 and Personal Well-being and Marital Relations at Time 1
and Time 2 for Empty Nest and Child-present Parents

Group	Measurement-Time 1			Measurement-Time 2		
	<u>n</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
General Well-being						
Empty Nest						
Parenting Difficulties-T1	18	-.59	.005	16	-.13	.317
Parenting Difficulties-T2	18			16	-.15	.086
Child-present						
Parenting Difficulties-T1	49	-.43	.001	44	-.14	.186
Parenting Difficulties-T2	44			46	-.46	.001
Marital Satisfaction						
Child-present						
Parenting Difficulties-T1	21	-.39	.04	20	-.49	.317
Parenting Difficulties-T2	22			21	-.69	.000
Non-Empty Nest						
Parenting Difficulties-T1	51	-.09	.253	42	-.26	.048
Parenting Difficulties-T2	65			43	-.51	.000
Marital Companionship						
Child-present						
Parenting Difficulties-T1	21	-.29	.105	21	-.44	.022
Parenting Difficulties-T2	22			22	-.32	.073
Non-Empty						
Parenting Difficulties-T1	50	.01	.468	41	-.14	.465
Parenting Difficulties-T2	44			41	-.33	.018
Personal Stress						
Child-present						
Parenting Difficulties-T1	19	.11	.32	20	.12	.31
Parenting Difficulties-T2	18			21	.53	.007
Non-Empty Nest						
Parenting Difficulties-T1	54	.29	.049	48	.16	.144
Parenting Difficulties-T2	47			49	.26	.003

Time 2 were found to be negatively related to empty nest parents' Marital Satisfaction at both Time 1 and Time 2. For child-present parents, Parenting Difficulties at Time 1 was negatively related to Marital Satisfaction at Time 2, but not at Time 1 (Table 14). The measure of Parenting Difficulties at Time 2 was found to be significantly related to Marital Satisfaction at Time 2 (Table 14). These findings suggest that Parenting Difficulties had an impact on Marital Satisfaction regardless of the presence of children in the home.

Pearson correlations on the variable of Marital Companionship showed no consistent pattern. Parenting Difficulties at Time 1 for empty nest parents were not related to Marital Companionship at Time 1, but were negatively related at Time 2. Parenting Difficulties at Time 2, however, were not related to Marital Companionship at Time 2 (Table 14). Among child-present parents, Parenting Difficulties at Time 1 and Time 2 were not found to be related to Marital Companionship at Time 1 or Time 2 (Table 14).

The final variable for which Parenting Difficulties correlations were run was Personal Stress. For both empty nest and child-present parents, Parenting Difficulties at Time 1 were not found to be related to Personal Stress at Time 1 or Time 2 (Table 14). Parenting Difficulties at Time 2 for both groups of parents, however, were related to

Table 15

Pearson Correlations between Parent-child Conflict at Time 1
and Time 2 and Personal Well-being and Marital Relations at
Time 1 and Time 2 for Empty Nest and Child-present Parents

Group	Measurement-Time 1			Measurement-Time 2		
	<u>n</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>r</u>	<u>p</u>
Marital Satisfaction						
Empty Nest						
Parent-Child Conflict-T1	23	-.36	.047	22	-.29	.093
Parent-Child Conflict-T2	22	-.34	.064	21	-.20	.193
Child-present						
Parent-Child Conflict-T1	55	-.02	.449	45	-.07	.336
Parent-Child Conflict-T2	48	-.07	.328	45	-.07	.134
Parenting Experiences						
Empty Nest						
Parent-Child Conflict-T1	21	.26	.126	22	.07	.377
Parent-Child Conflict-T2	20	.07	.380	21	.20	.195
Child-present						
Parent-Child Conflict-T1	60	.45	.000	52	.41	.001
Parent-Child Conflict-T2	50	.24	.043	52	.42	.001

Personal Stress (Table 14).

Parallel analyses were done between Parent-child Conflict and the dependent variables, but only one significant relationship was found. Parent-child Conflict for empty nest parents was significantly related to Marital Satisfaction at Time 1 but not at Time 2 (Table 15).

Finally, Pearson correlations were run for both groups of parents between Parent-child Conflict and Parenting Difficulties. A significant relationship was found between Parent-child Conflict at Time 1 and Time 2 and Parenting Difficulties at Time 1 and Time 2 for child-present parents while no significant relationships were found for empty nest parents as shown in Table 15.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of the analyses on the hypothesized relationships will be discussed followed by a section discussing the findings of the additional analyses that were done.

Comparisons of Empty Nest
and Child-present Parents
(Hypotheses 1-4)

Hypotheses One through Four were examined for differences between empty nest and child-present parents' scores on General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction, Marital Companionship, and Personal Stress. No significant differences were found for these comparison groups. This lack of statistically significant differences at first suggests that these findings are not consistent with the majority of studies which show that the launching of the youngest child from home tends to increase parents' feelings of personal well-being and marital relations, nor are they consistent with the few studies which have found postparenthood to have a negative impact on parents' personal well-being and marital relations. Closer examination of the data shows that while they were not statistically significant, all four comparisons were in the hypothesized direction.

There are several possible reasons as to why these results were not significant, yet were in the hypothesized direction. First, the sample size may not have been of sufficient size to have allowed for statistically significant results. The differences between empty nest and child-present parents may have been small because of the relatively short period of time the one group of parents had been without their youngest and the correspondingly short period of time child-present parents had had their youngest still at home. Comparisons of parents which have been child free for a longer period of time than those in this study with parents who have had their youngest child at home for a longer period of time may produce larger and statistically significant results than the findings of this study.

Also consistent with the small effects found in this study is the life events literature. Overall, life events tend to show consistent, but very small effects, as was found in this study. The launching of the youngest child is seldom mentioned in life events literature as an impactful event and when it is, it is usually far down the list.

A final possible explanation for the weak relationships found in this study comes from role theory which suggests that the loss of roles is less stressful than the gaining of roles.

Changes for Empty Nest
Parents (Hypotheses 5-8)

Hypotheses Five through Eight were examined to determine if changes occurred in parents' scores on General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction, Marital Companionship, or Personal Stress after their youngest child had left home. Again, no significant relationships were found and these hypotheses were not supported. These findings, however, were not all in the predicted direction as were the findings of the first four hypotheses. These comparisons were made using an even smaller group of respondents, which could account for the lack of significant findings in the predicted direction.

Also, the launching of the youngest child may not be the same experience for each parent. The experience may be positive for some and negative for others because of the mediating or buffer variables such as anticipatory socialization, participation in employment for women, participation in alternative roles and activities, etc. The net result may be a lack of results due to a cancellation of these two relationships.

The lack of support for the hypotheses thus far discussed may also be due to the low response rate obtained on the questionnaire, thus creating an unrepresentative sample of parents. This lack of statistically significant findings, however, is similar to findings by Lewis, Freneau

and Roberts (1979) and Saunders (1974). Lewis and his associates found that 35 percent of the subjects of this study (fathers only) had neutral feelings concerning the departure of their youngest child from home. Saunders (1974) reported that the majority (93%) of his subjects said that their satisfaction with life was only somewhat better, and no marked increase in life satisfaction was found. It is possible that the results of this study are accurate and that there are no reliable differences between groups or over time.

Before coming to this conclusion, however, some further analysis appear to be warranted to rule out alternative explanations. It might be, for example, that the most appropriate analysis strategy would differ from the present study in two ways. First, the key dependent measures could be measures of change in personal well-being and marital relations. In other words, the dependent variables for all subjects could be post test (Time 2) scores adjusted for Time 1 scores. Secondly, the independent variables could be related to these change scores in personal well-being and marital relations in a multivariate analysis so that their combined effects could be estimated. The effects of child presence or absence probably depend on the combination or mix of other life circumstances at this time of life.

Anticipatory Socialization
(Hypothesis 9)

No significant relationship was found between empty nest parents' scores on Anticipatory Socialization and their scores on the dependent variables. This may be due in part to definitional and/or measurement problems on this variable. The concept of Anticipatory Socialization used in this study comes from studies by Deutscher (1959) and Rubin (1979) who suggested that previous temporary absences of the children from the home for any reason, acts as Anticipatory Socialization for parents. It might be, however, that only certain types of absences from home have an effect on Anticipatory Socialization. Parental absence from the home and from the children to engage in non-parental activities may have a greater influence on the degree of Anticipatory Socialization than does the absence of the youngest child from the home.

Another aspect of Anticipatory Socialization that needs to be examined are the possible socializing effects of earlier launchings on parents' personal well-being and marital relations. There is some evidence which suggests that these prior launchings may indeed have a mediating effect. Lewis et al (1979) found that the fewer the number of children (hence the fewer the number of anticipatory launchings) the more negatively fathers perceived the launching of their youngest child.

Future studies need to carefully examine the concept of anticipatory socialization for these and other variables and then specific measures need to be developed and refined.

Alternative Activities
(Hypothesis 10)

No significant relationship was found for Hypothesis Ten which predicted that high involvement in Alternative Activities would be related to positive feelings of General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship, and lowered Personal Stress. This finding is not congruent with studies by Sussman (1955) and Rose (1955) who both found a positive relationship between involvement in activities and personal well-being.

The analysis used to test this hypothesis may not have been the most appropriate one possible. A procedure which examined the relationship of Alternative Activities and the dependent variables at Time 2 while partialing out the dependent variables at Time 1 may have been more appropriate to this study.

Alternative Work Experience
For Empty Nest Women
(Hypothesis 11)

No significant relationships were found between empty nest women's involvement in employment and the dependent measures. These findings suggest that involvement in employment may not fill the "void" left by the youngest child and even more strongly suggests that there may not be

a "void" in women's lives at this time of life at all. Research needs to be done comparing women of this general age group who work with those who do not work on the dependent variables, and then comparisons made on subsets of empty nest and child-present women who either do or do not work. Unfortunately the sample for this study was too small to allow for such an analyses.

Parenting Difficulties
(Hypothesis 12)

Hypothesis Twelve found a significant negative relationship between Parenting Difficulties at Time 1 and Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship at Time 2 for empty nest parents. Parents who had difficult parenting experiences also tended to have low Marital Satisfaction and Companionship scores. These findings were not in the expected direction because it has been hypothesized that high parenting difficulties would make childrens' leaving home something of a relief. The analysis did not really test this idea, however, because change scores were not used. No significant relationship was found for General Well-being and Personal Stress. The implications of these findings will be discussed in detail in the Additional Analysis section of this chapter.

Parent-child Conflict
(Hypothesis 13)

No significant relationship was found on Hypothesis Thirteen which predicted that for empty nest parents,

Parent-child Conflict would be positively related to General Well-being, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Companionship, and negatively related to Personal Stress. It is possible that Parent-child Conflict resulted in two different reactions by parents to the departure of their youngest child which cancelled out any significant effects.

Some parents may have been relieved to have their youngest child leave home since this may have ended the conflictful relationship. On the other hand, some research suggests that conflictful and unsatisfactory parent-child relationships are unsolved by the launching of the youngest child and leaves the parents with a feeling of failure (Rubin, 1979). Also, the hypothesis implies changes in the personal and marital dependent measures and these were not used in the analysis.

More sensitive measures of the parent-child relationship needs to be used in order to distinguish between these two possible reactions. This distinction will allow a much clearer picture to be developed of the effect of Parent-child Conflict on parents' personal well-being and marital relations at this time of life.

Sex Differences (Hypothesis 14)

Hypothesis Fourteen, which predicted no sex differences for empty nest parents on the dependent variable, was supported. This finding is consistent with Axelson's (1960)

and Saunder's (1974) findings of no sex differences for empty nest parents on the measures of personal happiness or marital satisfaction.

An examination of the effect of specific mediating variables need to be made rather than looking at sex differences by themselves. For example, it is quite possible that there would be differences due to women being either involved or not involved in work at this period of their lives when compared to men who are almost always involved in work at this time of their lives.

Additional Analyses

The most interesting substantive findings of this study came from the additional statistical analyses which were carried out on the data after the stated hypotheses were tested.

Parenting difficulties. For empty nest parents, difficult parenting experiences at Time 1 were significantly related to General Well-being at Time 1, but were not related to General Well-being at Time 2. This finding suggests that the presence of children in the home tends to have a negative impact on General Well-being when Parenting Difficulties are high. Further light is shed on this interpretation by examining the relationship between General Well-being and Parenting Difficulties for child-present parents. Parenting Difficulties at Time 2 was

significantly related to General Well-being at Time 1 and Time 2. This finding suggests that the presence of children in the home for child-present parents at Time 2 continues the negative relationship between Parenting Difficulties and General Well-being. When the children leave home, the negative relationship between Parenting Difficulties and General Well-being no longer exists. This finding is consistent with studies by Glenn and McLanahan (1981 and 1982). These investigators concluded that the presence of children in the home had little positive influence on parents' personal well-being and marital relations. It is also consistent with the great majority of the studies which suggest that the absence of children from the home brings about increased personal well-being and marital relations.

Difficult parenting experiences were found to be negatively related to Marital Satisfaction regardless of whether or not the children left home. Difficult parenting experiences seem to have a pervasive effect on parents' marital satisfaction. While a pattern consistent with the hypotheses were found between Parenting Difficulties and General Well-being, the correlations between Parenting Difficulties and Marital Satisfaction differ from the studies which have found that marital satisfaction increases when the youngest child is launched and also differs from

those studies which suggest that marital satisfaction decreases when the children leave home. Further investigation on the relationship between the quality of parenting experiences and marital satisfaction needs to be done to see why this relationship remains unchanged with the departure of the youngest child from home.

No clear or consistent patterns were found among the relationships between Parenting Difficulties and Marital Companionship and Personal Stress.

Parent-child conflict. Parent-child Conflict at Time 1 was significantly related to empty nest parents' Marital Satisfaction at Time 1, but was not related to Marital Satisfaction at Time 2. This relationship suggests that conflictful parent-child relationships have a negative impact on Marital Satisfaction while the youngest child is home, but when the youngest child has left home, Marital Satisfaction is no longer negatively influenced by this conflictful relationship. This is consistent with Rubin's (1979) finding that the women in her study who reacted most negatively to the departure of their youngest child were those who had unsatisfactory or disappointing relationships with them. This single finding offers only weak support for the hypothesized relationship since the other correlations between Parent-child Conflict and the other dependent

variables showed no meaningful patterns.

The measure of Parent-child Conflict also presents a reliability problem since it is a single item rather than a scale with established reliability. This problem might, along with the other factors mentioned in this chapter, be one possible explanation as to why the hypothesized relationships were not found.

The presence of a relationship between Parent-child Conflict at Time 1 and Time 2 and recent Parenting Experiences at Time 1 and Time 2 for child-present parents, and the lack of a relationship on the same variables for empty nest parents, suggest that Parent-child Conflict is an issue which has a negative impact on the quality of parenting experiences while the youngest child is home, while no relationship exists when parents anticipate that the child will be leaving within the next year or when the child is actually gone.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study was undertaken to determine what, if any, changes in parents' personal well-being and marital relations occurred when their youngest child left home. To accomplish this, a longitudinal research design was used. Eighty-nine parents responded to mail-out questionnaires at Time 1 and about one year later, seventy-eight parents responded at Time 2. Twenty-three of the parents responding at Time 2 had their youngest child leave home between the time surveys. The responses were compiled and analyzed by the use of several statistical procedures.

Overall, the results of this study show a general lack of support for the hypotheses. These findings seem to indicate that for the most part, having children leave home has little positive or negative effect on parents personal well-being or marital relations.

Significant relationships were found for parents who were experiencing parenting difficulties or whose relationship with their youngest child tended to be conflictful. The overall findings on these two variables suggest that low quality parenting experiences or high amounts of parent-child conflict negatively impact personal well-being and marital relations, and that the launching of

the youngest child lessens the negative impact of these two variables. An important exception to this overall finding was that low quality parenting experiences were related to marital satisfaction regardless of whether or not the youngest child left home.

This study has perhaps posed more questions than it has answered since the significant relationships which were found were in areas not previously investigated.

Further research should focus on the effects of the parent-child relationship and parents feelings about their parenting experiences. Longitudinal research designs should be implemented and efforts should be made to obtain larger random samples to study. Also, alternative statistical procedures need to be used which allow changes in the dependent variables to be related to the independent variables. Finally, the measures used to study postparenthood need to be refined and then several studies need to be carried out using the same measures.

Limitations of the Study

Any conclusions reached in this study must be considered in light of the following limitations: (1) The sample was taken from only one geographic location; (2) The parents surveyed were predominantly of one religious orientation; (3) A low response rate was obtained for the mailed questionnaire; (4) The reliability co-efficients for

the measures of Personal Stress were low; (5) The sample contained a greater porportion of female than males; (6) The sample was not randomly chosen; and (7) Other statistical procedures would have better tested the hypotheses.

FOOTNOTES

1. The proportion of the population that experiences the postparental period is dependent on several variables, and is arrived at indirectly due to a lack of specific measurement of this phenomenon. First, the number of people who never marry must be considered. Only four to five percent of those people who are now over forty years of age, have never married (Lasswell & Lasswell, 1982). The second factor to be considered is the proportion of these people who remain childless. Veevers (1979) estimates that five percent of those that marry are currently voluntarily childless. The proportion of voluntary childlessness is probably less for those who are now experiencing the postparental stage than for those who are currently of a younger age. Another seven to eight percent of the population are involuntarily childless (Veevers, 1979; Menning, 1977). From this, one can deduce that about eighty seven percent of those who marry have children. There are, however, several other factors that must be taken into consideration. Two factors tend to increase the percentage of the population who experience the empty nest stage. Not all childbearing is confined to marriage and some mothers may choose not to marry. Also, childless couples may choose to adopt and thus be able to experience this period of life. Factors that tend to decrease the proportion of the

population that experience this stage are divorce leading to singlehood where no children were born prior to the divorce, and/or remarriage in which one or both spouses are childless and/or desires to remain that way. Also, the failure of children to achieve maturity and be launched from the nest has an impact on the normativeness of this experience. Perhaps the best estimate comes from a study by Murray (1976). She reports that over 80 percent of those who have ever married, who are between the ages of fifty-eight and sixty three, have living children.

2. The surveys for Glenn and McLanahan (1981) and Glenn and McLanahan (1982) are both from the 1973 through 1978 General Social Surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center. No indication was given as to whether the six surveys were the same ones for both studies.

3. Semantic differential scales consist of bi-polar adjectives which are placed at the ends of a seven point rating scale. Respondents are asked to check the point on the scale which best represents their feelings or descriptions of the concept or object.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.
Instructions to the Teacher

TO THE TEACHER:

This request applies only to teachers who have one or more seniors in their first hour class. We realize your time is valuable, so what we are asking will only take one or two minutes.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Distribute the attached forms to all seniors in your first hour class on the first or second morning after receiving them.
2. Allow a minute or so for the students to respond.
3. Collect the completed forms immediately.
4. Return the forms to the office by the afternoon of the second day.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Brent C. Miller

Kenneth H. Cannon

Utah State University

SAMPLE STUDENT FORM:

Appendix B.
Student Self-report Form

TO THE STUDENT:

CHECK ONE

yes no

ARE YOU A SENIOR? ☐ ☐

ARE YOU THE YOUNGEST CHILD IN YOUR FAMILY? ☐ ☐

WRITE THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF YOUR PARENT OR PARENTS
WHO YOU ARE LIVING WITH.

MOTHER:

FATHER:

ADDRESS: _____
 street city state zip

Appendix C.
Questionnaire 1

WHEN THE CHILDREN ARE GONE:
FEELINGS ABOUT POSTPARENTHOOD

*They must go free
Like fishes in the sea
Or starlings in the skies
Whilst thou remain
The shore where casually they come again.*

Frances Cornford

(10 #) _____

Parenthood Questionnaire #1

The first section below asks for background information. Please answer every question. Most of the questions in later sections ask about your feelings or opinions, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer completely and honestly.

A. Background Information

- A1. Is your youngest child a boy or a girl?
 ___ 1. boy
 ___ 2. girl
- A2. In all, how many children have you had? (circle the number)
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 more than 10 ___
- A3. How many children are living with you now? 1 2 3 4 5
 6 7 8
- A4. Check the percentage of financial needs you provide for your youngest child.
 ___ 0% ___ 60%
 ___ 10% ___ 70%
 ___ 20% ___ 80%
 ___ 30% ___ 90%
 ___ 40% ___ 100%
 ___ 50%
- A5. Are you providing financial support to any of your other children living at home?
 ___ 1. yes
 ___ 2. no
- A6. Are you providing financial support to any of your children who are living away from home?
 ___ 1. yes
 ___ 2. no
- A7. How often has your youngest child been away from home alone?
 ___ 1. never
 ___ 2. once or twice
 ___ 3. occasionally
 ___ 4. often
 ___ 5. regularly
- A8. What is the longest period of time your youngest child has been away from home?
 ___ 1. less than one week
 ___ 2. one week or more
 ___ 3. two or three weeks
 ___ 4. one month
 ___ 5. two months
 ___ 6. three months or more
- A9. Circle the number of years of schooling or technical training you have completed;
 7 8 9 (jr. high)
 10 11 12 (sr. high)
 13 14 15 16 (college)
 17 18 19 20+ (graduate)
- A10. Have you received any vocational or occupational training not included under schooling? (please circle) 0 1 2 3 4
 years
- A11. Are you currently attending school, or involved in some sort of training?
 ___ 1. yes
 ___ 2. no
- A12. How many years has it been since you last attended school?
 ___ years
- A13. On the average, how many hours are you employed each week?
 ___ 0. not employed
 ___ 1. twenty hours or less
 (part time)
 ___ 2. forty hours (full time)
 ___ 3. over forty hours

- A14. If you are not currently employed, how long has it been since you were last employed?
_____ months or years
- A15. Do you work for pay in your home?
____ 1. yes
____ 2. no
- A16. Please check if you were employed (full or part time) at or around the following ages.
____ 20 years _____ 50 years
____ 30 years _____ 60 years
____ 40 years _____
- A17. Are you retired?
____ 1. yes
____ 2. no
- A18. Please check your own personal income and your family's total income for the past year. Check both columns.
- | Personal | Family |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| 0 . . . none | _____ |
| 1 . . . \$1-4,999 | _____ |
| 2 . . . 5,000-9,999 | _____ |
| 3 . . . 10,000-14,999 | _____ |
| 4 . . . 15,000-19,999 | _____ |
| 5 . . . 20,000-24,999 | _____ |
| 6 . . . 25,000-29,999 | _____ |
| 7 . . . 30,000-34,999 | _____ |
| 8 . . . 35,000 plus | _____ |
- A19. Check the following activities which you have been involved in during the past year, or are currently involved in.
____ 1. student in school
____ 2. church attendance
____ 3. church leader or position
____ 4. fraternal lodges or veterans organizations
____ 5. business or civic groups
____ 6. professional groups
____ 7. parent-teacher associations
____ 8. youth groups, scouts (cub, boy, girl), little league sports
____ 9. neighborhood improvement associations
____ 10. social or card playing groups
____ 11. study groups
____ 12. regular sports, exercise program, recreational activities
____ 13. country club
____ 14. political organizations or clubs
____ 15. issue or action oriented groups
____ 16. hobbies
____ 17. charity or welfare service
____ 18. cultural events (concerts, plays, art shows, dance, etc.)
____ 19. vacations or outings with just you and your spouse
____ 20. other _____
- A20. What is your present marital status?
____ 1. first marriage
____ 2. remarriage (second or subsequent marriage)
____ 3. divorced, living alone
____ 4. widowed, living alone
____ 5. other _____
- A21. If you are now married, how many years have you been married to your present spouse?
_____ years
- A22. If you are divorced or widowed, how many years ago did you become single?
_____ years
- A23. What is your age?
_____ years
- A24. What is your sex?
____ 1. male
____ 2. female

A25. What is your religious preference?

- ___ 1. Catholic
- ___ 2. Protestant (which denomination) _____
- ___ 3. Mormon _____
- ___ 4. other _____
- ___ 5. no preference _____

A26. How often do you attend religious services?

- ___ 1. once a week
- ___ 2. once or twice a month
- ___ 3. monthly
- ___ 4. every few months
- ___ 5. several times a year
- ___ 6. once a year
- ___ 7. never

B. Your Present Life

Here are some words we would like you to use to describe how you feel about your present life. For example, if you think your present life is boring, put an X in the blank right next to the word "boring". If you think it is very interesting, put an X in the blank right next to the word "interesting". If you think it belongs somewhere in between, put an X where you think it belongs.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
B1. BORING	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	INTERESTING
B2. ENJOYABLE	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	MISERABLE
B3. EASY	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	HARD
B4. USELESS	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	WORTHWHILE
B5. FRIENDLY	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	LONELY
B6. FULL	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	EMPTY
B7. DISCOURAGING	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	HOPEFUL
B8. TIED DOWN	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	FREE
B9. DISAPPOINTING	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	REWARDING
B10. BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN ME	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	DOESN'T GIVE ME MUCH CHANGE
B11. Some people have so many problems in their everyday life that they worry they might have a nervous breakdown. Do you ever worry about that?								
	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	
	___ 1. yes							
	___ 2. no							
B12. In general, how do you feel about your time? Would you say that you are:								
	___ 1. always rushed, even to do the things you have to do							
	___ 2. only sometimes feel rushed							
	___ 3. never feel rushed							
B13. How often would you say that you have time on your hands that you don't know what to do with?								
	___ 1. quite often							
	___ 2. just now and then							
	___ 3. almost never							

- B14. Do you ever worry that your total family income will not be enough to meet your family's expenses and bills?
- ☐ 1. never
 - ☐ 2. just now and then
 - ☐ 3. some of the time
 - ☐ 4. most of the time
 - ☐ 5. all of the time
- B15. Is there anything about your life these days that makes you frightened or worried?
- ☐ 1. yes
 - ☐ 2. no

C. General Well-Being

This section contains questions about how you feel and how things have been going for you. For each question, check the answer which best applies to you. Some questions may seem similar, but please answer every one; they are all part of a nationally standardized measure of well-being.

- C1. How have you been feeling in general? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. in excellent spirits
 - ☐ 2. in very good spirits
 - ☐ 3. in good spirits mostly
 - ☐ 4. I have been up and down in spirits a lot
 - ☐ 5. in low spirits mostly
 - ☐ 6. in very low spirits
- C2. Have you been bothered by nervousness or your "nerves"? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. extremely so--to the point where I could not work or take care of things
 - ☐ 2. very much so
 - ☐ 3. quite a bit
 - ☐ 4. some--enough to bother me
 - ☐ 5. a little
 - ☐ 6. not at all
- C3. Have you been in firm control of your behavior, thoughts, emotions or feelings? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. yes, definitely so
 - ☐ 2. yes, for the most part
 - ☐ 3. generally so
 - ☐ 4. not too well
 - ☐ 5. no, and I am somewhat disturbed
 - ☐ 6. no, and I am very disturbed
- C4. Have you felt so sad, discouraged, hopeless, or had so many problems that you wondered if anything was worthwhile? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. extremely so--to the point that I have just about given up
 - ☐ 2. very much so
 - ☐ 3. quite a bit
 - ☐ 4. some--enough to bother me
 - ☐ 5. a little bit
 - ☐ 6. not at all
- C5. Have you been under or felt you were under any strain, stress, or pressure? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. yes--almost more than I could bear or stand
 - ☐ 2. yes--quite a bit of pressure
 - ☐ 3. yes--some-more than usual
 - ☐ 4. yes--some-but about usual
 - ☐ 5. yes-a little
 - ☐ 6. not at all

- C6. How happy, satisfied, or pleased have you been with your personal life? (during the past month)
- ___ 1. extremely happy--could not have been more satisfied or pleased
 - ___ 2. very happy
 - ___ 3. fairly happy
 - ___ 4. satisfied--pleased
 - ___ 5. somewhat dissatisfied
 - ___ 6. very dissatisfied
- C7. Have you had any reason to wonder if you were losing your mind, or losing control over the way you act, talk, think, feel, or of your memory? (during the past month)
- ___ 1. not at all
 - ___ 2. only a little
 - ___ 3. some--but not enough to be concerned or worried about
 - ___ 4. some and I have been a little concerned
 - ___ 5. Some and I am quite concerned
 - ___ 6. Yes, very much so and I am very concerned
- C8. Have you been anxious, worried, or upset? (during the past month)
- ___ 1. extremely so--to the point of being sick or almost sick
 - ___ 2. very much so
 - ___ 3. quite a bit
 - ___ 4. some--enough to bother me
 - ___ 5. a little bit
 - ___ 6. not at all
- C9. Have you been waking up fresh and rested? (during the past month)
- ___ 1. every day
 - ___ 2. most every day
 - ___ 3. fairly often
 - ___ 4. less than half the time
 - ___ 5. rarely
 - ___ 6. none of the time
- C10. Have you been bothered by any illness, bodily disorder, pains, or fears about your health? (during the past month)
- ___ 1. all of the time
 - ___ 2. most of the time
 - ___ 3. a good bit of the time
 - ___ 4. some of the time
 - ___ 5. a little of the time
 - ___ 6. none of the time
- C11. Has your daily life been full of things that were interesting to you? (during the past month)
- ___ 1. all of the time
 - ___ 2. most of the time
 - ___ 3. a good bit of the time
 - ___ 4. some of the time
 - ___ 5. a little of the time
 - ___ 6. none of the time
- C12. Have you felt down-hearted and blue? (during the past month)
- ___ 1. all of the time
 - ___ 2. most of the time
 - ___ 3. a good bit of the time
 - ___ 4. some of the time
 - ___ 5. a little of the time
 - ___ 6. none of the time
- C13. Have you been feeling emotionally stable and sure of yourself? (during the past month)
- ___ 1. all of the time
 - ___ 2. most of the time
 - ___ 3. a good bit of the time
 - ___ 4. some of the time
 - ___ 5. a little of the time
 - ___ 6. none of the time
- C14. Have you felt tired, worn out, used-up or exhausted? (during the past month)
- ___ 1. all of the time
 - ___ 2. most of the time
 - ___ 3. a good bit of the time
 - ___ 4. some of the time
 - ___ 5. a little of the time
 - ___ 6. none of the time

For each of the four scales below, note that the words at each end of the 1 to 10 scale describe opposite feelings. Circle the number which seems closest to how you have generally felt DURING THE PAST MONTH.

- C15. How concerned or worried about your HEALTH have you been? (during the past month)
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not | | | | | | | | Very | |
| Concerned | | | | | | | | Concerned | |
| At All | | | | | | | | | |

- C15. How RELAXED or TENSE have you been? (during the past month)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Very Very
Relaxed Tense

- C17. How much ENERGY, PEP, VITALITY have you felt? (during the past month)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
No energy Very
AT ALL, ENERGETIC,
listless dynamic

- C18. How DEPRESSED or CHEERFUL have you been? (during the past month)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Very Very
Depressed Cheerful

- C19. Have you had severe enough personal, emotional, behavior, or mental problems that you felt you needed help DURING THE PAST YEAR?

- ___ 1. yes, and I did seek professional help
___ 2. yes, but I did not seek professional help
___ 3. I have had (or have now) severe personal problems, but have not felt I needed professional help
___ 4. I have had very few personal problems of any serious concern
___ 5. I have not been bothered at all by personal problems during the past year

- C20. Have you ever felt that you were going to have, or were close to having, a nervous breakdown?

- ___ 1. YES--during the past year
___ 2. YES--more than a year ago
___ 3. NO

- C21. Have you ever had a nervous breakdown?

- ___ 1. YES--during the past year
___ 2. YES--more than a year ago
___ 3. NO

- C22. Have you ever been a patient (or outpatient) at a mental hospital, a mental health ward of a hospital, or a mental health clinic, for any personal, emotional, behavior, or mental problem?

- ___ 1. YES--during the past year
___ 2. YES--more than a year ago
___ 3. NO

- C23. Have you ever seen a psychiatrist, psychologist, or psychoanalyst about personal, emotional, behavior, or mental problem concerning yourself?

- ___ 1. YES--during the past year
___ 2. YES--more than a year ago
___ 3. NO

Have you talked with or had any connection with any of the following about some personal, emotional, behavior, mental problem, worries, or "nerves" CONCERNING YOURSELF during the past year?

- C24. Regular medical doctor (except for definite physical conditions or routine check-ups)

- ___ 1. YES
___ 2. NO

- C25. Brain or nerve specialist

- ___ 1. YES
___ 2. NO

- C26. Nurse (except for routine medical conditions)

- ___ 1. YES
___ 2. NO

- C27. Lawyer (except for routine legal services)

- ___ 1. YES
___ 2. NO

- C28. Police (except for simple traffic violations)

- ___ 1. YES
___ 2. NO

- C29. Clergyman, minister, bishop, priest, rabbi, etc.

- ___ 1. YES
___ 2. NO

C30. Marriage counselor

- ___ 1. YES
___ 2. NO

C31. Social worker

- ___ 1. YES
___ 2. NO

C32. Other formal assistance

- ___ 1. YES--what kind? _____

___ 2. NO _____

C33. Do you discuss your problems with any members of your family or friends?

- ___ 1. YES--and it helps a lot
___ 2. YES--and it helps some
___ 3. YES--but it does not help at all
___ 4. NO--I do not have anyone I can talk with about my problems
___ 5. NO--no one cares to hear about my problems
___ 6. NO--I do not care to talk about my problems with anyone
___ 7. NO--I do not have any problems

D. Recent Parenting Experiences: Listed below are some words that we would like you to use to describe how you feel about your recent experiences as a parent. Check the blank that comes closest to describing how you feel.

In general, has your parenting experience during the past year been:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
D1. HAPPY	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	SAD
D2. JOYFUL	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	PAINFUL
D3. BORING	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	INTERESTING
D4. EASY	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	HARD
D5. ENJOYABLE	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	MISERABLE
D6. DISAPPOINTING	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	REWARDING
D7. DISCOURAGING	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	HOPEFUL
D8. FULL	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	EMPTY
D9. USELESS	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	WORTHWHILE
D10. GOOD	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	BAD

D11. During the past year, how often have you had disagreements with your youngest child?

- ___ 1. never
___ 2. seldom
___ 3. occasionally
___ 4. frequently
___ 5. constantly

- D12. During the past year, how often have you had disagreements with your spouse about how to deal with your youngest child?
- ☐ 1. never
 - ☐ 2. seldom
 - ☐ 3. occasionally
 - ☐ 4. frequently
 - ☐ 5. constantly
- D13. Many parents feel closer to some children than others. Please describe as honestly as you can, the degree of closeness between you and your youngest child.
- ☐ 1. distant
 - ☐ 2. indifferent
 - ☐ 3. fairly close
 - ☐ 4. quite close
 - ☐ 5. extremely close

IF YOU ARE MARRIED: Please continue with Section E, "Marital Feelings".

IF YOU ARE SINGLE: You have finished the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your cooperation. Please return the completed questionnaire immediately using the prepaid, pre-addressed envelope.

E. Marital Feelings

Please mark how satisfied you are now with each of the following aspects of your marriage. Check the box that is closest to your present feelings.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Very dis-satisfied	A little dis-satisfied	Mostly satisfied	Very satisfied	Perfectly satisfied
E1. the way money is handled in your marriage.					
E2. the things you and your mate do when you go out for entertainment, fun.					
E3. the amount of affection in your marriage.					
E4. the way chores around the house are performed.					

	1	2	3	4	5
	Very dis- satisfied	A little dis- satisfied	Mostly satisfied	Very satisfied	Perfectly satisfied
E5. the way you and your mate deal with in-laws in your marriage.					
E6. sexual relations in your marriage					
E7. religious beliefs and activities in your marriage.					

In these final questions we want you to tell us how often you do things together in your marriage. We are not so interested in your feelings as in your most accurate report of how often these things occur.

How often have you and your mate done these things together in the past month?	None or Never	Maybe once a month	Two or three times a month	About once a week	Two or three times a week	Everyday or more
E8. had a stimulating exchange of ideas						
E9. laughed together or shared a joke						
E10. worked together on a project						
E11. visited friends together						
E12. gone out for entertainment or recreation						
E13. taken a drive or walk just for fun						

	None or Never	Maybe once a month	Two or three times a month	About once a week	Two or three times a week	Everyday or more
E14. spent some time just chatting together						
E15. been warm and affec- tionate						
E16. Gone out to eat together						

Thank you very much for your cooperation in filling out this questionnaire. Please return the completed questionnaire immediately using the prepaid, pre-addressed envelope. To insure the confidentiality of your answers, send your questionnaire in a separate envelope from your spouse.

If you would like a summary of the results of this study, please check the appropriate blank.

- ☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the results.
☐ No, sending a summary of the results will not be necessary.

Appendix D.
Cover Letter 1



UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY · LOGAN, UTAH 84322
COLLEGE OF FAMILY LIFE

DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY AND
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
UMC 29

May 14, 1981

Dear Parent:

Have you ever wondered how people's feelings change when their youngest child leaves home? Do they celebrate, just feel the same, or go into mourning? A few of us from the Department of Family and Human Development at Utah State are interested in finding out more about this time in parent's lives. Currently, we don't know much about what happens to parents when the youngest child in the family leaves home.

We're writing to you because your youngest child is a senior in high school. We expect that in some families the youngest child will leave home during the first year or so after graduation. This may happen in your family, so we are asking for your help and cooperation in filling out three short questionnaires. Enclosed you will find the first questionnaire. Next fall, and again in the fall of 1982, we will send out similar questionnaires. This will allow us to compare how parents felt before and after their youngest child left home.

If at any time you wish to discontinue your participation in the study, you are free to do so. We do, however, wish to stress that your personal answers to these questions will make a significant difference in finding out about this important period of life. Be assured that your answers to the questionnaire are confidential-- your name and individual responses will not be disclosed to anyone.

Please fill out the questionnaire enclosed with this letter as soon as possible. When you have completed the questionnaire, place it in the pre-addressed, prepaid envelope and return it by May 27. If you are married, fill out the questionnaire separately from your spouse.

This study promises to be unusually interesting and exciting and will provide both practical and scientific benefits. If you would like a brief summary of the results, then please check "yes" on the last page of your questionnaire. Also, to thank you for your participation, we are enclosing a certificate for a free ice cream cone from the USU Dairy. Thanks again for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Brent C. Miller

Kenneth H. Cannon

cc

enclosures

P.S. Even if your youngest child is not planning to leave home, your response is essential to compare with parents whose children do leave.

Appendix E.
Certificate for Free Ice Cream Cone

FREE

ICE CREAM CONE

*This coupon is good for a
single scoop ICE CREAM CONE
at the USU Dairy Bar
720 North 1200 East*

Compliments of
Dept. of Family & Human Development

(Expires June 15, 1981)

Appendix F.
Reminder Postcard 1 and 2

June 3, 1981

Dear Parent(s):

If you have completed the Postparenthood Questionnaire, thank you very much for your cooperation! If you haven't completed or returned it yet, please do so. Your individual answers will make a difference in the outcome of the study.

Thanks Again,

Ken Cannon
Brent Miller

Appendix G.
Cover Letter 2

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY · LOGAN, UTAH 84322

COLLEGE OF FAMILY LIFE

DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY AND
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
UMC 29

April 1, 1982

Thank you for your earlier participation in our study about how parents change when their youngest child leaves home. We mentioned a year ago when we sent the first questionnaire that we would be sending you another one. Only by comparing responses on the first and second questionnaires will we be able to tell if there have been changes, so please complete this one too. Of course your youngest child might not have left home yet; if this is the case with you, it is still essential for you to fill out the questionnaire to compare with parents whose children have left.

We wish to stress that your answers to these questions will make a significant difference in finding out about this important period of life. Be assured that your answers to the questionnaire are confidential--your name and individual responses will not be disclosed to anyone.

Please fill out the enclosed questionnaire as soon as possible. When you have completed the questionnaire, place it in the pre-addressed, prepaid envelope and return it by April 20. If you are married, fill out the questionnaire separately from your spouse.

This study promises to be unusually interesting and will provide both practical and scientific benefits. If you would like a brief summary of the results, then please check "yes" on the last page of your questionnaire. Thanks again for your cooperation.

Sincerely,


Brent C. Miller


Kenneth H. Cannon

cc

enclosures

Appendix H.
Questionnaire 2

WHEN THE CHILDREN ARE GONE:
FEELINGS ABOUT POSTPARENTHOOD

*They must go free
Like fishes in the sea
Or starlings in the skies
Whilst thou remain
The shore where casually they come again.*

Frances Cornford

(ID #) _____

Parenthood Questionnaire #2

The first section below asks for background information. Please answer every question. Most of the questions in later sections ask about your feelings or opinions, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer completely and honestly.

A. Background Information

- A1. How many children are living with you now? (Circle one)
 0 1 2 3 4 5
- A2. Has your youngest son or daughter moved out of your home since their graduation from high school?
 1. yes
 2. no
- *****
 * If you answered yes to this *
 * question, go on to the next *
 * one A3. If you answered no *
 * to this question, skip to *
 * question number A10. *

- A3. When did he or she leave home?
 1981
 June October
 July November
 August December
 September 1982
 January
- A4. What is the approximate distance in miles between your home and where your youngest son or daughter now lives?
 miles
- A5. Does your youngest son or daughter live in
 1. the same community?
 2. another community, but the same state?
 3. another community in a different state?
 4. another country?
- A6. How frequently does your youngest son or daughter talk with you on the telephone?
 1. never
 2. every few months
 3. once a month
 4. two or three times a month
 5. once a week
 6. several times a week
 7. daily
- A7. How frequently does your youngest son or daughter write letters home?
 1. never
 2. every few months
 3. once a month
 4. two or three times a month
 5. once a week
 6. several times a week
 7. daily
- A8. How frequently does your youngest son or daughter come home to visit you?
 1. never
 2. every few months
 3. once a month
 4. two or three times a month
 5. once a week
 6. several times a week
 7. daily
- A9. Is it likely that your youngest son or daughter will return to live in your home at some future time?
 1. very likely
 2. somewhat likely
 3. uncertain
 4. somewhat unlikely
 5. very unlikely

- A10. What is your youngest son or daughter doing now?
- ☐ 1. working part-time
 - ☐ 2. working full-time
 - ☐ 3. working and attending school
 - ☐ 4. attending school only
 - ☐ 5. military service
 - ☐ 6. missionary service
 - ☐ 7. other _____
- (specify)

- A11. What is your youngest son or daughter's present marital status?
- ☐ 1. single
 - ☐ 2. married
 - ☐ 3. divorced
 - ☐ 4. other _____
- (specify)

- A12. Check the percentage of financial needs you provide for your youngest child.
- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0% | <input type="checkbox"/> 60% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10% | <input type="checkbox"/> 70% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20% | <input type="checkbox"/> 80% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30% | <input type="checkbox"/> 90% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40% | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 50% | |

- A13. Are you providing financial support to any of your other children living at home?
- ☐ 1. yes
 - ☐ 2. no

- A14. Are you providing financial support to any of your children who are living away from home?
- ☐ 1. yes
 - ☐ 2. no

- A15. Are you currently attending school, or involved in some sort of training?
- ☐ 1. yes
 - ☐ 2. no

- A16. On the average, how many hours are you employed each week?
- ☐ 0. not employed
 - ☐ 1. twenty hours or less (part-time)
 - ☐ 2. forty hours (full-time)
 - ☐ 3. over forty hours

- A17. Do you work for pay in your home?
- ☐ 1. yes
 - ☐ 2. no

- A18. Please check your own personal income and your family's total income for the past year. Check both columns.

Personal	Family
0 . . . None	_____
1 . . . \$1-4,999	_____
2 . . . 5,000-9,999	_____
3 . . . 10,000-14,999	_____
4 . . . 15,000-19,999	_____
5 . . . 20,000-24,999	_____
6 . . . 25,000-29,999	_____
7 . . . 30,000-34,999	_____
8 . . . 35,000-plus	_____

- A19. Check the following activities which you have been involved in during the past year, or are currently involved in.
- ☐ 1. student in school
 - ☐ 2. church attendance
 - ☐ 3. church leader or position
 - ☐ 4. fraternal lodges or veterans organizations
 - ☐ 5. business or civic groups
 - ☐ 6. professional groups
 - ☐ 7. parent-teacher associations
 - ☐ 8. youth groups, scouts (cub, boy, girl), little league sports
 - ☐ 9. neighborhood improvement associations

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. social or card playing groups | <input type="checkbox"/> 16. hobbies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11. study groups | <input type="checkbox"/> 17. charity or welfare services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12. regular sports, exercise program, recreational activities | <input type="checkbox"/> 18. cultural events (concerts, plays, art shows, dance, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13. country club | <input type="checkbox"/> 19. vacations or outings with just you and your spouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14. political organizations or clubs | <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15. issue or action oriented groups | _____ |
| | _____ |

B. Your Present Life

Here are some words we would like you to use to describe how you feel about your present life. For example, if you think your present life is boring, put an X in the blank right next to the word "boring". If you think it is very interesting, put an X in the blank right next to the word "interesting". If you think it belongs somewhere in between, put an X where you think it belongs.

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------------|
| B1. BORING | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | INTERESTING |
| B2. ENJOYABLE | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | MISERABLE |
| B3. EASY | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | HARD |
| B4. USELESS | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | WORTHWHILE |
| B5. FRIENDLY | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | LONELY |
| B6. FULL | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | EMPTY |
| B7. DISCOURAGING | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | HOPEFUL |
| B8. TIED DOWN | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | FREE |
| B9. DISAPPOINTING | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | REWARDING |
| B10. BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN ME | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | DOESN'T GIVE ME MUCH CHANCE |
| B11. Some people have so many problems in their everyday life that they worry they might have a nervous breakdown. Do you ever worry about that? | | | | | | | | |
| 1. yes | | | | | | | | |
| 2. no | | | | | | | | |
| B12. In general, how do you feel about your time? Would you say that you are: | | | | | | | | |
| 1. always rushed, even to do the things you have to do | | | | | | | | |
| 2. only sometimes feel rushed | | | | | | | | |
| 3. never feel rushed | | | | | | | | |
| B13. How often would you say that you have time on your hands that you don't know what to do with? | | | | | | | | |
| 1. quite often | | | | | | | | |
| 2. just now and then | | | | | | | | |
| 3. almost never | | | | | | | | |

B14. Do you ever worry that your total family income will not be enough to meet your family's expenses and bills?

- ___ 1. never
- ___ 2. just now and then
- ___ 3. some of the time
- ___ 4. most of the time
- ___ 5. all of the time

B15. Is there anything about your life these days that makes you frightened or worried?

- ___ 1. yes
- ___ 2. no

C. General Well-Being

This section contains questions about how you feel and how things have been going for you. For each question, check the answer which best applies to you. Some questions may seem similar, but please answer every one; they are all part of a nationally standardized measure of well-being.

C1. How have you been feeling in general? (during the past month)

- ___ 1. in excellent spirits
- ___ 2. in very good spirits
- ___ 3. in good spirits mostly
- ___ 4. I have been up and down in spirits a lot
- ___ 5. in low spirits mostly
- ___ 6. in very low spirits

C2. Have you been bothered by nervousness or your "nerves"? (during the past month)

- ___ 1. extremely so--to the point where I could not work or take care of things
- ___ 2. very much so
- ___ 3. quite a bit
- ___ 4. some--enough to bother me
- ___ 5. a little
- ___ 6. not at all

C3. Have you been in firm control of your behavior, thoughts, emotions or feelings? (during the past month)

- ___ 1. yes, definitely so
- ___ 2. yes, for the most part
- ___ 3. generally so
- ___ 4. not too well
- ___ 5. no, and I am somewhat disturbed
- ___ 6. no, and I am very disturbed

C4. Have you felt so sad, discouraged, hopeless, or had so many problems that you wondered if anything was worthwhile? (during the past month)

- ___ 1. extremely so--to the point that I have just about given up
- ___ 2. very much so
- ___ 3. quite a bit
- ___ 4. some--enough to bother me
- ___ 5. a little bit
- ___ 6. not at all

C5. Have you been under or felt you were under any strain, stress, or pressure? (during the past month)

- ___ 1. yes--almost more than I could bear or stand
- ___ 2. yes--quite a bit of pressure
- ___ 3. yes--some--more than usual
- ___ 4. yes--some--but about usual
- ___ 5. yes--a little
- ___ 6. not at all

- C6. How happy, satisfied, or pleased have you been with your personal life? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. extremely happy--could not have been more satisfied or pleased
 - ☐ 2. very happy
 - ☐ 3. fairly happy
 - ☐ 4. satisfied--pleased
 - ☐ 5. somewhat dissatisfied
 - ☐ 6. very dissatisfied
- C7. Have you had any reason to wonder if you were losing your mind, or losing control over the way you act, talk, think, feel, or of your memory? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. not at all
 - ☐ 2. only a little
 - ☐ 3. some--but not enough to be concerned or worried about
 - ☐ 4. some and I have been a little concerned
 - ☐ 5. Some and I am quite concerned
 - ☐ 6. yes, very much so and I am very concerned
- C8. Have you been anxious, worried, or upset? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. extremely so--to the point of being sick or almost sick
 - ☐ 2. very much so
 - ☐ 3. quite a bit
 - ☐ 4. some--enough to bother me
 - ☐ 5. a little bit
 - ☐ 6. not at all
- C9. Have you been waking up fresh and rested? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. every day
 - ☐ 2. most every day
 - ☐ 3. fairly often
 - ☐ 4. less than half the time
 - ☐ 5. rarely
 - ☐ 6. none of the time
- C10. Have you been bothered by any illness, bodily disorder, pains, or fears about your health? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. all of the time
 - ☐ 2. most of the time
 - ☐ 3. a good bit of the time
 - ☐ 4. some of the time
 - ☐ 5. a little of the time
 - ☐ 6. none of the time
- C11. Has your daily life been full of things that were interesting to you? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. all of the time
 - ☐ 2. most of the time
 - ☐ 3. a good bit of the time
 - ☐ 4. some of the time
 - ☐ 5. a little of the time
 - ☐ 6. none of the time
- C12. Have you felt down-hearted and blue? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. all of the time
 - ☐ 2. most of the time
 - ☐ 3. a good bit of the time
 - ☐ 4. some of the time
 - ☐ 5. a little of the time
 - ☐ 6. none of the time
- C13. Have you been feeling emotionally stable and sure of yourself? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. all of the time
 - ☐ 2. most of the time
 - ☐ 3. a good bit of the time
 - ☐ 4. some of the time
 - ☐ 5. a little of the time
 - ☐ 6. none of the time
- C14. Have you felt tired, worn out, used-up or exhausted? (during the past month)
- ☐ 1. all of the time
 - ☐ 2. most of the time
 - ☐ 3. a good bit of the time
 - ☐ 4. some of the time
 - ☐ 5. a little of the time
 - ☐ 6. none of the time
- For each of the four scales below, note that the words at each end of the 1 to 10 scale describe opposite feelings. Circle the number which seems closest to how you have generally felt DURING THE PAST MONTH.
- C15. How concerned or worried about your HEALTH have you been? (during the past month)
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not | | | | | | | | Very | |
| Concerned | | | | | | | | Concerned | |
| At All | | | | | | | | | |

- C16. How RELAXED or TENSE have you been? (during the past month)
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Very | | | | | | | | | Very |
| Relaxed | | | | | | | | | Tense |
- C17. How much ENERGY, PEP, VITALITY have you felt? (during the past month)
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| No energy | | | | | | | | | Very |
| AT ALL | | | | | | | | | ENERGETIC |
| listless | | | | | | | | | dynamic |
- C18. How DEPRESSED or CHEERFUL have you been? (during the past month)
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Very | | | | | | | | | Very |
| Depressed | | | | | | | | | Cheerful |
- C19. Have you had severe enough personal, emotional, behavior, or mental problems that you felt you needed help DURING THE PAST YEAR?
- ___ 1. yes, and I did seek professional help
 - ___ 2. yes, but I did not seek professional help
 - ___ 3. I have had (or have now) severe personal problems, but have not felt I needed professional help
 - ___ 4. I have had very few personal problems of any serious concern
 - ___ 5. I have not been bothered at all by personal problems during the past year
- C20. Have you ever felt that you were going to have, or were close to having, a nervous breakdown?
- ___ 1. YES--during the past year
 - ___ 2. YES--more than a year ago
 - ___ 3. NO
- C21. Have you ever had a nervous breakdown?
- ___ 1. YES--during the past year
 - ___ 2. YES--more than a year ago
 - ___ 3. NO
- C22. Have you ever been a patient (or outpatient) at a mental hospital, a mental health ward of a hospital, or a mental health clinic, for any personal, emotional, behavior, or mental problem?
- ___ 1. YES--during the past year
 - ___ 2. YES--more than a year ago
 - ___ 3. NO
- C23. Have you ever seen a psychiatrist, psychologist, or psychoanalyst about personal, emotional, behavior, or mental problem concerning yourself?
- ___ 1. YES--during the past year
 - ___ 2. YES--more than a year ago
 - ___ 3. NO
- Have you talked with or had any connection with any of the following about some personal, emotional, behavior, mental problem, worries, or "nerves" CONCERNING YOURSELF during the past year?
- C24. Regular medical doctor (except for definite physical conditions or routine check-ups)
- ___ 1. YES
 - ___ 2. NO
- C25. Brain or nerve specialist
- ___ 1. YES
 - ___ 2. NO
- C26. Nurse (except for routine medical conditions)
- ___ 1. YES
 - ___ 2. NO
- C27. Lawyer (except for routine legal services)
- ___ 1. YES
 - ___ 2. NO
- C28. Police (except for simple traffic violations)
- ___ 1. YES
 - ___ 2. NO
- C29. Clergyman, minister, bishop, priest, rabbi, etc.
- ___ 1. YES
 - ___ 2. NO

C30. Marriage counselor

1. YES
2. NO

C31. Social worker

1. YES
2. NO

C32. Other formal assistance

1. YES--What kind? _____
2. NO _____

C33. Do you discuss your problems with any members of your family or friends?

1. YES--and it helps a lot
2. YES--and it helps some
3. YES--but it does not help at all
4. NO--I do not have any-one I can talk with about my problems
5. NO--no one cares to hear about my problems
6. NO--I do not care to talk about my problems with anyone
7. NO--I do not have any problems

D. Recent Parenting Experiences: Listed below are some words that we would like you to use to describe how you feel about your recent experiences as a parent. Check the blank that comes closest to describing how you feel.

In general, has your parenting experience during the past year been:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
D1. HAPPY	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	SAD
D2. JOYFUL	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	PAINFUL
D3. BORING	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	INTERESTING
D4. EASY	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	HARD
D5. ENJOYABLE	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	MISERABLE
D6. DISAPPOINTING	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	REWARDING
D7. DISCOURAGING	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	HOPEFUL
D8. FULL	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	EMPTY
D9. USELESS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	WORTHWHILE
D10. GOOD	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	BAD

D11. During the past year, how often have you had disagreements with your youngest child?

1. never
2. seldom
3. occasionally
4. frequently
5. constantly

D12. During the past year, how often have you had disagreements with your spouse about how to deal with your youngest child?

- ☐ 1. never
- ☐ 2. seldom
- ☐ 3. occasionally
- ☐ 4. frequently
- ☐ 5. constantly

D13. Many parents feel closer to some children than others. Please describe as honestly as you can, the degree of closeness between you and your youngest child.

- ☐ 1. distant
- ☐ 2. indifferent
- ☐ 3. fairly close
- ☐ 4. quite close
- ☐ 5. extremely close

IF YOU ARE MARRIED: Please continue with Section E, "Marital Feelings".

IF YOU ARE SINGLE: You have finished the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your cooperation. Please return the completed questionnaire immediately using the prepaid, pre-addressed envelope.

E. Marital Feelings

Please mark how satisfied you are now with each of the following aspects of your marriage. Check the box that is closest to your present feelings.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Very dis-satisfied	A little dis-satisfied	Mostly satisfied	Very satisfied	Perfectly satisfied
E1. the way money is handled in your marriage.					
E2. the things you and your mate do when you go out for entertainment, fun.					
E3. the amount of affection in your marriage.					
E4. the way chores around the house are performed.					

	1	2	3	4	5
	Very dis-satisfied	A little dis-satisfied	Mostly satisfied	Very satisfied	Perfectly satisfied
E5. the way you and your mate deal with <u>in-law</u> in your marriage.					
E6. sexual relations in your marriage					
E7. religious beliefs and activities in your marriage.					

In these final questions we want you to tell us how often you do things together in your marriage. We are not so interested in your feelings as in your most accurate report of how often these things occur.

How often have you and your mate done these things together in the past month?

	None or Never	Maybe once a month	Two or three times a month	About once a week	Two or three times a week	Everyday or more
E8. had a stimulating exchange of ideas						
E9. laughed together or shared a joke						
E10. worked together on a project						
E11. visited friends together						
E12. gone out for entertainment or recreation						
E13. taken a drive or walk just for fun						

	None or Never	Maybe once a month	Two or three times a month	About once a week	Two or three times a week	Everyday or more
E14. spent some time just chatting together						
E15. been warm and affec- tionate						
E16. Gone out to eat together						

Thank you very much for your cooperation in filling out this questionnaire. Please return the completed questionnaire immediately using the prepaid, pre-addressed envelope. To insure the confidentiality of your answers, send your questionnaire in a separate envelope from your spouse.

If you would like a summary of the results of this study, please check the appropriate blank.

- ☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the results.
☐ No, sending a summary of the results will not be necessary.

Appendix I. Reliability and
Composition of Measures

General well-being. The General Well-being schedule (GWB) was developed in 1970 for the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) by Dr. Harold Dupuy. It was pretested on 373 adults and then administered to over 6,900 adults as part of the national study of the Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, which was conducted from 1971 through 1975.

Fazio (1977) conducted a validation study on the GWB. The GWB was compared to a variety of self report scales, including the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), the Psychiatric Symptoms Scale (PSS), and Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale and the College Health Questionnaire. The internal consistency co-efficients of reliability for the GWB were .921 for males, and .945 for females. The test-retest correlation for the total scale was .851. The high level of internal consistency on the GWB indicates that is a homogeneous scale. The study also found that the concurrent validity was slightly better than that of the longer and more involved assessment scales (Fazio, 1977). Reliability co-efficients of the GWB for the current study were as follows: Time 1-Alpha = 0.91; Time 2 - Alpha = 0.85.

The GWB contains 33 items - the first 14 items have 6 response options, the next four items are 0 - 10 rating bars, and the last 15 items are criterion-type behavioral and self-evaluation items. In the context of the questionnaires, the General Well-Being schedules cover the following items: GWB 1 - Questionnaire 1, Section c, Items C1 - C33; and GWB 2 - Questionnaire 2, Section C, Items C1 - C33 (see Appendices C and H).

Personal stress. The Personal Stress scale developed by Campbell, Converse and Rogers (1976) and Campbell (1976) was derived from a ten item semantic differential scale. Two of the ten items on the scale do not correlate as highly to the group as do the other eight items. These items - "easy" vs. "hard" and "free" vs. "tied-down" and the five questions concerning the persons sense of being rushed, their worries about money and their worries in general, comprise the Personal Stress scale and are found in Questionnaire 1 and Questionnaire 2 in Section B, or Items B3, B8, and B11 - B15.

No reliability coefficients for this scale were mentioned by Campbell et al (1976) or Campbell (1976) so coefficients were computed on the data collected for this study. Reliability coefficients for the Personal Stress Scale were 0.46 at Time 1, and 0.47 at Time 2.

Because these coefficients were so low, an Item total correlation procedure was used which gives a reliability coefficient for the scale with a given item deleted. The procedure is then repeated for each item so that the scale can be refined and the reliability increased by dropping one or more items from the scale. Based on this procedure, questionnaire item B11 was deleted from the Personal Stress scale. This change improved the reliability coefficients to 0.56 at Time 1 and 0.53 at Time 2.

Marital satisfaction. Miller's (1976) study of marital satisfaction reported reliability coefficients of .81 for the Marital Satisfaction scale. Reliability coefficients computed on the present data were 0.86 at Time 1 and 0.87 at Time 2.

The Marital Satisfaction scale is composed of Items E1-E7 on both questionnaires.

Marital companionship. The reliability coefficient for Marital Companionship scale (Miller, 1976) were .75. Reliability coefficients computed on the present data were .87 at Time 1 and .85 at Time 2. The Marital Companionship Scale is composed of items E8-E16 on both questionnaires.

Anticipatory socialization. No reliability coefficients were computed for the Anticipatory Socialization measure. The measure is composed of items A7 and A8 of Questionnaire 1.

Alternative activities. No reliability coefficients were computed for the Alternative Activities measure. The measure is composed of items A19 on both questionnaires

Involvement in work. The measure of Involvement in Work is a single item and no reliability coefficients were computed. Item A13 of Questionnaire 1 is the Involvement in Work measure.

Parenting difficulties. This scale is composed of items D1 - D10 on both questionnaires. Reliability coefficients computed for this scale were .93 at Time 1 and .91 at Time 2.

Because this study is the initial testing and useage of this scale, the Item-total correlations at Time 1 are reported in Table 12.

Parent-child conflict. This variable is composed of Item D11 of Questionnaire 1. No reliability coefficients were computed.

Table 16
 Item-total Correlations of Reliability for the
 Parenting Difficulties Scale at Time 1

Item	Mean If Item Deleted	Variance If Item Deleted	Item- Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Alpha If Item Deleted
D1	19.65432	93.30401	0.86230	0.87311	0.91497
D2	19.55556	94.55000	0.80229	0.82348	0.91822
D3	20.06173	107.83364	0.54183	0.38615	0.93097
D4	18.32099	101.34568	0.43571	0.25295	0.94098
D5	19.64198	94.55772	0.88046	0.81201	0.91459
D6	19.70370	93.93611	0.82820	0.88779	0.91680
D7	19.70370	95.11111	0.83596	0.84909	0.91671
D8	19.67901	96.52068	0.71106	0.54567	0.92320
D9	19.87654	100.88457	0.66889	0.47908	0.92524
D10	19.80247	94.21049	0.77762	0.64513	0.91955

Alpha = 0.92962

Standardized Item Alpha = .093242

VITA

Kenneth H. Cannon
Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: When the Children are Gone: Changes in Mental
Health and Marital Relations during the Transition
to Postparenthood

Major Field: Family and Human Development

Biographical Information

Personal Data: Born in Logan, Utah, August 23, 1954,
son of Melvin C. and Anne H. Cannon;
Married Martha (Marty) Evelyn Hibbard,
December 19, 1977;
Children: Melissa Anne and Haley Evelyn

Education: Graduated from Logan High School,
Logan, Utah in 1972. Received Bachelor
of Science degree at Utah State
University, Logan, Utah in 1979 with
a major in Secondary Education in
Psychology. Will complete requirements
for Master of Science degree in Family
and Human Development at Utah State
University in 1984.

Professional Experience:

1983 - Present Job Training Program Specialist for
Bear River Associates of Government,
Logan, Utah - Develop jobs with
public and private employers to place
clients. Council and train clients in
job seeking and life skills. Write
grant proposals. Project director for
tri-county human needs survey.

1982 - 1983 Research Assistant for Business and
Economic Development Service,
Utah State University -
Critique and review of manuscripts for
publication. Development of
Promotional brochures for Human
Resource Administration Degree Program.

- 1981 - 1982 Instructor for Cooperative Extension Services, Utah State University - Instructed undergraduate courses in child development.
- 1980 - 1982 Research Assistant for Department of Family and Human Development at Utah State University - Critique and review of manuscripts for publication. Reviewed abstracts submitted for presentation at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Meeting - 1982.
- Presentations: Calculating Personal Worth on the Marriage Market.
J.D. Schvaneveldt and K.H. Cannon
Poster Presentation at NCFR Annual Meeting, Research and Theory Section
Washington, D.C. in October 1982.